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HALF A MILLION OF MONEY BY A. B. EDWARDS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

"O Bella età dell' oro!" — GUARINI.

HALF A MILLION OF MONEY.

A NOVEL.

BY

AMELIA B. EDWARDS,

AUTHOR OF "BARBARA'S HISTORY," ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

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HALF A MILLION OF MONEY.

PROLOGUE. A.D. 1760.

JACOB TREFALDEN, merchant and alderman of London, lay dying in an upper chamber of his house in Basinghall-street, towards evening on the twenty-second day of March, Anno Domini seventeen hundred and sixty.

It was growing rapidly dusk. The great house was full of gloom, and silence, and the shadow of death. Two physicians occupied two easy chairs before the fire in the sick man's chamber. They were both notabilities in their day. The one was Sir John Pringle, Physician Extraordinary to the King — a brave and skilful man who had smelt powder at Dettingen, and won the soldiers' hearts by his indomitable coolness under fire. The other was Doctor Joshua Ward, commonly called "Spot Ward" from his rubicund face; and immortalised by Hogarth in that bitter caricature called The Company of Undertakers.

These gentlemen did little in the way of conversation. When they spoke at all, it was in a whisper. Now and then, they compared their watches with the time-piece on the mantelshelf. Now and then, they glanced towards the bed where, propped almost upright with pillows, an old man was sinking gradually out of life. There was something very ghastly in that old

man's face, purple-hued, unconscious, and swathed in wet bandages. His eyes were closed. His lips were swollen. His breathing was slow and stertorous. He had been smitten down that day at noon by a stroke of apoplexy; was carried home from 'Change in a dying state; and had not spoken since. His housekeeper crouched by his bed-side, silent and awestruck. His three sons and his lawyer waited in the drawing-room below. They all knew that he had not two more hours to live.

In the meantime the dusk thickened, and the evening stillness grew more and more oppressive. A chariot rumbled past from time to time, or a newsvender trudged by, hawking the London Gazette, and proclaiming the progress of Lord George Sackville's trial. Sometimes a neighbour's footboy came to the door with a civil inquiry; or a little knot of passengers loitered on the opposite pavement, and glanced up, whisperingly, at the curtained windows. By-and-by, even these ceased to come and go. A few oil-lamps were lighted at intervals along the dingy thoroughfare, and the stars and the watchmen came out together.

"In the name of Heaven," said Captain Trefalden, "let us have lights!" — and rang the drawing-room bell.

Candles were brought, and the heavy damask curtains were drawn. Captain Trefalden took up the Gazette; Frederick Trefalden looked at himself in the glass, arranged the folds of his cravat, yawned, took snuff, and contemplated the symmetry of his legs; William Trefalden drew his chair to the table, and began abstractedly turning over the leaves of the last "Idler." There were other p[illegible] books on the table as

well — among them a little volume called "Rasselas," from the learned pen of Mr. Samuel Johnson (he was not yet LL.D.), and the two first volumes of "Tristram Shandy," written by that ingenious gentleman, the Reverend Laurence Sterne. Both works were already popular, though published only a few months before.

These three brothers were curiously alike, and curiously unlike. They all resembled their father! they were all fine men; and they were all good-looking. Old Jacob was a Cornish man, had been fair and stalwart in his youth, and stood five feet eleven without his shoes. Captain Trefalden was not so fair; Frederick Trefalden was not so tall; William Trefalden was neither so fair, nor so tall, nor so handsome; and yet they were all like him, and like each other.

Captain Jacob was the eldest. His father had intended him for his own business; but, somehow or another, he had never took kindly to indigo. He preferred scarlet — especially scarlet turned up with buff — and he went into the army. Having led a roving, irregular youth; sown his wild oats in various congenial European soils; and fought gallantly at Dettingen, Fontenoy, Laffeldt, and Minden, he had now, at forty years of age, committed the unspeakable folly of marrying for neither rank nor money, but only for love. His father had threatened to disinherit Captain Trefalden for this misdeed, and for five months past had forbidden him the house. His brothers were even more indignant than their father — or had seemed to be so. In short, this was the first occasion on which the worthy officer had set foot in Basinghall-street for many a long day; and all three gentlemen were naturally somewhat constrained and silent.

Frederick, the second son, was thirty-six; William, thirty. Frederick hated indigo almost as cordially as his brother Jacob; William had scarcely a thought that was not dyed in it. Frederick was an airy, idle, chocolate-drinking, snuff-taking, card-playing, ridotto-haunting man of pleasure. William was a cool, methodical, ambitious man of business. Neither of the three had ever cared much for the other two. It was not in the nature of things that much affection should exist between them. Their temperaments and pursuits were radically unlike. They had lost their mother while they were yet boys. They had never had a sister. The sweet womanly home-links had all been wanting to bind their hearts together.

And now the brothers were met under their father's roof, this memorable third evening in April; and in the dark chamber overhead, already beyond all help from human skill, that father lay dying. They were all thinking the same thoughts in the silence of their hearts, and in those thoughts there was neither prayer nor sadness. Poor old man! He was immensely rich — he was pitiably destitute. No one loved him; and he was worth Half a Million of Money.

Mr. Frederick Trefalden took out his watch, swore a fashionable oath, and declared that he was famishing.

"Have somewhat to eat, brother Fred," suggested the captain; and so rang the bell again, and ordered refreshments to be taken into the dining-room.

The two younger Trefaldens exchanged glances and a covert smile. Their elder brother was already assuming the master, it should seem; Well, well, Lawyer Beavington is there, and the will has yet to be read.

In the meantime Mr. Fred and the captain go down together; for the latter has ridden up from Hounslow, and will not object to join his brother in "a snack of cold meat and a bumper of claret." Mr. Will, like a sober citizen, has dined at two o'clock, and only desires that a dish of tea may be sent to him in the drawing-room.

If anything could be more dismal than that gloomy drawing-room it was the still gloomier dining-room below. The walls were panelled with dark oak, richly carved. The chimney-piece was a ponderous cenotaph in black and yellow marble. The hangings were of mulberry-coloured damask. A portrait of the master of the house, painted forty years before by Sir James Thornhill, hung over the fireplace. Seen by the feeble glimmer of a couple of wax lights, there was an air of sepulchral magnificence about the place which was infinitely depressing. The very viands might have reminded these gentlemen of funeral-baked meats — above all, the great veal pasty, which lay in state in the middle of the board. They were both hungry, however, and it did nothing of the kind.

The captain took his place at the head of the table, and plunged his knife gallantly into the heart of the pasty.

"If thou hast as good a stomach, Fred, as myself," said he, growing cordial under the influence of the good things before him, "I'll warrant thee we'll sack this fortress handsomely!"

The fine gentleman shrugged his shoulders somewhat contemptuously.

"I detest such coarse dishes," said he, "I dined

with Sir Harry Fanshawe yesterday at the Hummums. We had a ragout of young chicks, not a week out of the shell, and some à-la-mode beef that would have taken thy breath away, brother Jacob."

"I'd as lieve eat of this pasty as of any ragout in Christendom," said the captain.

"Mr. Horace Walpole and Mrs. Clive were at dinner all the time in the next room," continued the beau; "and the drollest part of the story is that Sir Harry and I adjourned in the evening to Vauxhall, and there, by Jove! found ourselves supping in the very next box to Mr. Horace and Mrs. Kitty again!"

"Help yourself to claret, Fred — and pass the bottle," said the captain, who, strange to say, saw no point in the story at all.

"Not bad wine," observed Mr. Fred, tasting his claret with the air of a connoisseur. "The old gentleman hath an excellent cellar."

"Ay, indeed," replied the captain, thoughtfully.

"But he never knew how to enjoy his money."

"Never."

"To live in a place like this, for instance," said the beau, looking round the room. "Basinghall-street — faugh! And to keep such a cook; and never to have set up his chariot! 'Sdeath, sir, you and I will know better what to do with the guineas!

"I should think so, brother Fred, I should think so," replied the captain, with a touch of sadness in his voice, "'Twas a dull life — poor old gentleman! Methinks you and I might have helped to make it gayer."

"Curse me, if I know how!" ejaculated Mr. Fred.

"By sticking to the business — by living at home

— by doing like young Will, yonder," replied the elder brother. "That boy hath been a better son than you or me, brother Fred."

Mr. Fred looked very grave indeed. "Will hath an old head on young shoulders," said he. "Harkee, Jacob, hast any notion how the old man hath bestowed his money?"

"No more than this glass of claret," replied the captain.

They were both silent. A footstep went by in the hall. They listened; they looked at each other; they filled their glasses again. The same thought was uppermost in the mind of each.

"The fairest thing, Fred," said the honest captain, "would be, if 'twere left to us, share and share alike."

"Share and share alike!" echoed Mr. Fred, with a sounding oath. "Nay; the old man was too proud of his fortune to do that, brother Jacob. My own notion of this matter is — hush! Anyone listening?"

Captain Trefalden rose, glanced into the hall, closed the door, and resumed his seat.

"Not a soul. Well?"

"Well, my own notion is, that we younger sons shall have a matter of sixty or eighty thousand a piece; while you, as the head of the family, will take the bulk."

"It may be, Fred," mused the captain, complacently.

"And that bulk," continued Mr. Fred, "will be some three hundred and forty thousand pounds."

"I shall have to ask thee, Fred, how to spend it," said the captain, smiling.

"Then thou shalt spend it like a prince. Thou shalt buy an estate in Kent, and a town-house in

Soho; thou shalt have horses, chariots, lacqueys, liveries, wines, a pack of hounds, a box at the Italian Opera—"

"Of which I don't understand a word," interrupted the captain.

"A French cook, a private chaplain, a black footboy, a suite of diamonds for thy wife, and for thyself the prettiest mistress —"

"Hold, Fred," interposed the captain again. "None of the last, I beseech thee. My days of gallantry are over."

"But, my dear brother, no man of quality —"

"I'm not a man of quality," said the other. "I'm a simple soldier, and the son of a plain city merchant."

"Well, then, no man of parts and fortune —"

"The fortune's not mine yet, Fred," said the captain, dryly. "And as for my parts, why I think the less said of them the better. I'm no scholar, and that thou knowest as well as myself. Hark! some one taps. Come in."

The door opened, and a bronzed upright man, with something of a military bearing, came in. He held his hat and cane in his hand, and saluted the brothers courteously. It was Sir John Pringle.

"Gentlemen," he said, gravely, "I grieve to be the bearer of sad tidings."

The brothers rose in silence. Captain Trefalden changed colour.

"Is he — is my father dead?" he faltered.

The physician bent his head.

Captain Trefalden turned his face away, Frederick Trefalden took out his handkerchief, and ostentatiously wiped away a tear — which was not there.

"Dr. Ward is gone," said Sir John, after a brief

pause. "He desired his respects and condolences. Gentlemen, I wish you a good evening."

"You will take a glass of claret, Sir John?" said Mr. Fred, pressing forward to the table. But almost before he could say the words, the physician had waved a civil negative, and was gone. Mr. Fred shrugged his shoulders, filled the glass all the same, and emptied it.

"Zounds, brother," said he, "'tis of no use to be melancholy. Remember thou'rt now the head of the family. Let us go up-stairs, and read the will."

In the mean time, William Trefalden, like a methodical young man of business, had been up to his father's room to find his father's keys, and down to the counting-house to fetch his father's deed-box out from the iron-safe. When Mr. Fred and the Captain came into the room, they found Lawyer Beavington with his spectacles on, and the box before him.

"Gentlemen," he said, with calm importance, "be pleased to sit."

So the brothers drew their chairs to the table, and sat down; all silent; all somewhat agitated.

The man of law unlocked the box.

It was full of papers, leases, transfers, debentures, agreements, bills of exchange, and so forth. These had all to be taken out, opened, and laid aside before the will turned up. That important document lay at the very bottom, like hope at the bottom of Pandora's casket.

"'Tis not a long will," observed Mr. Beavington, with a preparatory cough.

As he unfolded it, a slip of paper fell out.

"A memorandum, apparently, in your excellent father's own hand," said he, glancing through it. "Hm

— ha — refers to the amount of his fortune. Have you, gentlemen, framed any ideas of the extent of the property?"

"'Twas thought my father owned half a million of money," replied Mr. Fred, eagerly.

"More than that," said the youngest son, with a shake of the head.

"You are right, sir. The memorandum runs thus: '*Upon a rough calculation, I believe I may estimate my present estate at about five hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds. (Dated) January the first, Anno Domini seventeen hundred and sixty. Jacob Trefalden.*' A goodly fortune, gentlemen — a goodly fortune!"

The three brothers drew a deep breath of satisfaction.

"Five hundred and twenty-five thousand pounds!" repeated the Captain. "Prythee, Mr. Beavington, proceed to the will."

The lawyer folded up the memorandum very slowly, drew the candles nearer, wiped his spectacles, and began.

"'In the name of GOD, AMEN. I JACOB TREFALDEN born in the town of Redruth in the County of Cornwall and now a citizen of London, Merchant (a Widower) being at present in good health of Body, and of sound and disposing Mind and Memory, for which I bless GOD, Do this eleventh day of January one thousand seven hundred and sixty make and ordain this my last Will and Testament in manner and form following (that it is to say) IMPRIMIS I DESIRE to be interred in my Family Vault by the side of my lately deceased wife and with as little Pomp and ceremony as maybe. ITEM I give to such of my Executors hereinafter named as shall act under this my Will Five Hundred pounds Sterling each to be paid to or retained by them within

six Calendar Months after my decease. I give to my three sons Jacob, Frederick and William Five Thousand pounds Sterling each. I give —'"

"Stay! five thou — please to read that again, Mr. Beavington," interrupted Captain Trefalden.

"Five Thousand pounds Sterling each," repeated the lawyer. "The amount is quite plain. But have patience, gentlemen. We are but at the preliminaries. This five thousand each hath, doubtless, some special purpose. The main business is to come."

"Very possibly — very possibly, Mr. Beavington," replied the Captain. "I am all attention."

"'ITEM I GIVE to my Cashier Edward Prescott Five Hundred pounds Sterling. I GIVE to my other clerks One Hundred pounds Sterling each. AND I GIVE to my Household Servants Two Hundred pounds Sterling, to be divided among them in equal shares. All which last mentioned legacies I direct shall be paid within three Calendar Months next after my decease. I GIVE to the Minister for the time being of Redruth aforesaid and to the Minister for the time being of the Parish in which I shall happen to reside immediately previous to my decease One Hundred pounds Sterling each to be paid to them within One Calendar Month after that event shall happen and be by them forthwith distributed in such manner and proportion as they shall think proper among the poor Widows belonging to their Parishes respectively. ITEM, I do hereby direct and appoint that my Executors shall as soon as possible after my decease set apart out of my Property which consists entirely of Personal Estate, and is chiefly invested in the Government Stocks and Funds of this Kingdom, so much of my Funded property as shall be

equal in value to the sum of Five Hundred Thousand pounds Sterling —'"

"Ha! now for it!" exclaimed Mr. Fred, breathlessly.

"'— the sum of Five Hundred Thousand pounds Sterling,'" continued the lawyer, "'which I give to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London for the time being and their successors for ever IN TRUST for the purposes hereinafter expressed, and I desire that as to this Gift they shall be called "'TREFALDEN'S TRUSTEES,'" and that the amount of my Funded Property so to be set apart shall immediately afterwards be transferred to them accordingly.'"

The lawyer paused to clear his glasses. The brothers looked blankly in each other's faces.

"Good God! Mr. Beavington," gasped Captain Trefalden, "what does this mean?"

"On my word, sir, I have no more notion than yourself," replied the lawyer. "The will is none of my making."

"Who drew it up?" asked Mr. Will, peremptorily.

"Not I, sir. Your father hath gone to some stranger for this business. But perchance when we know more —"

"Enough, sir, go on," said Mr. Fred and Mr. Will together.

The lawyer continued:

"'AND I hereby declare my Will to be that my said Trustees shall receive the annual Income of the said Trust Fund, and lay out and invest such Income in their names in the Purchase of Government Securities, and repeat such receipts and Investments from time to time in the nature of Compound Interest during

the space of One Hundred years from the date of my decease, and that such accumulations shall continue and be increased until the same, with the original Trust Fund, shall amount to, and become in the aggregate, one entire clear principal sum of NINE MILLION POUNDS Sterling and upwards, AND I DESIRE that the same entire clear Principal Sum shall thenceforth be, or be considered as, divided into two equal parts, AND I GIVE One equal half part thereof unto the direct Heir Male of the Eldest Son of my Eldest Son, in total exclusion of the younger Branches of my Family and their descendants. AND as to the other equal half part of the said entire Principal Sum, I DIRECT my said Trustees to apply and dispose of the same in manner following (that is to say) IN the first place, in purchasing within the liberties of the City of London a plot of Freehold Ground of sufficient magnitude, and erecting thereon, under the superintendence of some eminent Architect, a Handsome and Substantial Building, with all suitable Offices, to be called "'"THE LONDON TREFALDEN BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION."'"

"'And in the next place, in affording pecuniary aid as well permanent as temporary to decayed Tradesmen, Mercantile Men, Ship Brokers, Stock Brokers, Poor Clergymen, and Members of the Legal and Medical Professions, and the Widows and Orphans of each of those Classes respectively, and, if thought fit, to advance Loans without Interest to honest but unfortunate Bankrupts. With full power to receive into the Institution a limited number of poor and deserving Persons being Widows and Orphans of Citizens of London, and to maintain, clothe, and educate them so long as the Trustees shall think proper.

"'And in order that such Institution may be properly established and may be managed and supported in a satisfactory manner, I request my said Trustees to prepare a scheme for the permanent Establishment and support thereof, and to submit the same to the Master of the Rolls for his approval. Provided always that in case there shall be no such Male Heir in the direct line from the Eldest Son of my Eldest Son, Then I direct my said Trustees to apply the first mentioned half of the said entire principal sum in founding lesser Institutions of a similar kind to the above in Manchester, Liverpool, Bristol and Birmingham for the benefit of the several classes of persons above enumerated and all which Institutions it is my Will shall be governed by the same Laws and Regulations as the original Institution or as near thereto as circumstance will permit. Item I give all the rest and residue of my Funded Property, Ready Money and Securities for Money, Merchandise, Debts, Pictures, Plate, Furniture, and all other my Property not otherwise disposed of by this my Will (but subject to the payment of my Debts, Legacies, Funeral and Testamentary expenses) Unto my said three Sons in equal shares, and in case any dispute shall arise between as to the division thereof the matter shall be referred to my Executors whose decision shall be final. Lastly I appoint my friends Richard Morton, Erasmus Brooke, Daniel Shuttleworth, and Arthur Mackenzie all of London, General Merchants, to be the Executors of this my Will. In witness whereof I the said Jacob Trefalden have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year first above written.

"'Jacob Trefalden.

"'Signed sealed published and declared by the above named Jacob Trefalden as and for his last Will and Testament in the presence of us who at his request and in his presence have subscribed our Names as Witnesses thereunto.

"'Signed. "'NATHANIEL MURRAY.
"'ALEXANDER LLOYD.'"

Mr. Beavington laid down the will, and took off his glasses. The brothers sat staring at him, like men of stone. William Trefalden was the first to speak.

"I shall dispute this will," he said, looking very pale, but speaking in a firm, low tone. "It is illegal."

"It is a d—d, unnatural, infamous swindle," stammered Mr. Fred, starting from his seat, and shaking his clenched fist at the open document. "If I had known what a cursed old fool —"

"Hush, sir, hush, I entreat," interposed the lawyer. "Let us respect the dead."

"Zounds! Mr. Beavington, we'll respect the dead," said Captain Trefalden, bringing his hand down heavily upon the table; "but I'll be hanged if we'll respect the deed! If it costs me every penny of the paltry five thousand, I'll fight this matter out, and have justice."

"Patience, brother Jacob — patience, brother Fred," said the youngest Trefalden. "I tell you both, the will is illegal."

"How so, sir?" asked the lawyer, briskly. "How so?"

"By the Mortmain Act passed but a few years since —"

"In seventeen hundred and thirty-six, statute nine of his present Majesty King George the Second," interposed Mr. Beavington.

"— which permits no money or land to be given in trust for the benefit of any charitable uses whatever."

The lawyer nodded approvingly.

"Very true, very true — very well remembered, Mr. Will," he said, rubbing his hands; "but you forget one thing."

"What do I forget?"

"That 'a citizen of London may, by the custom of London, devise Land situate in London in Mortmain; but he cannot devise Land out of the city in Mortmain,' and for that quotation I can give you chapter and verse, Mr. Will."

Mr. Will put his hand to his head with a smothered groan.

"Then, by Heavens!" said he, tremulously, "'tis all over."

It was all over, indeed. Mr. Fred had spoken truly of the pride which Jacob Trefalden took in his fortune. Great as it was, he resolved to build it yet higher, and sink its foundations yet more broadly and deeply. To leave a colossal inheritance to an unborn heir, and to found a charity which should perpetuate his name through all time, were the two projects nearest and dearest to that old man's heart. He had brooded over them, matured them, exulted in them secretly, for many a past year. The marriage of Captain Trefalden in November, 1759, only hastened matters, and legalised a foregone conclusion. Well was it for Jacob Trefalden's sons that his fortune amounted to that odd twenty-five thousand pounds. The Half Million had slipped through their fingers, and was lost to them for ever.

CHAPTER I.

The Passing of a Hundred Years.

When the princess in the fairy tale went to sleep for a hundred years, everything else in that enchanted palace went to sleep at the same time. The natural course of things was suspended. Not a hair whitened on any head within those walls. Not a spider spun its web over the pictures; not a worm found its way to the books. The very Burgundy in the cellar grew none the riper for the century that it had lain there. Nothing decayed, in short, and nothing improved. Very different was it with this progressive England of ours during the hundred years that went by between the spring-time of 1760 and that of 1860, one hundred years after. None went to sleep in it. Nothing stood still. All was life, ferment, endeavour. That endeavour, it is true, may not always have been best directed. Some cobwebs were spun; some worms were at work; some mistakes were committed; but, at all events, there was no stagnation. *En revanche*, if, when we remember some of those errors, we cannot help a blush, our hearts beat when we think of the works of love and charity, the triumphs of science, the heroes and victories which that century brought forth. We lost America, it is true; but we conquered India, we annexed the Canadas, and we colonised New Zealand and Australia. We fought the French on almost every sea and shore upon the map, except, thank God! our own. We abolished slavery in our colonies. We established the liberty of the press. We lit our great city from end to end with a light only second to that of day. We invented the steam-engine and the electric telegraph. We learned to decipher those records which have been

laid up during countless ages in the heart of the everlasting rocks. We discovered an unsuspected science in the very speech we use. We originated a system of coaching at twelve miles the hour, which was unrivalled in Europe; and we superseded it by casting a network of iron roads all over the face of the country, along which the traveller has been known to fly at the rate of a mile a minute. Truly a marvellous century! perhaps the most marvellous which the world has ever known, since that from which all our years are dated!

And during the whole of this time, the Trefalden legacy was fattening at interest, assuming overgrown proportions, doubling, trebling, quadrupling itself over and over and over again.

Not so the Trefalden family. They had increased and multiplied but scantily, according to the average of human kind; and had had but little opportunity of fattening, in so far as that term may be applied to the riches of the earth. One branch of it had become extinct. Of the other two branches only three representatives remained. We must pause to consider how these things came to pass, but only for a few moments; for of all the trees that have ever been cultivated by man, the genealogical tree is the driest. It is one, we may be sure, that had no place in the garden of Eden. Its root is in the grave; its produce mere Dead Sea fruit — apples of dust and ashes.

The extinct branch of the Trefaldens was that which began and ended in Mr. Fred. That ornament to society met his death in a tavern row about eighteen months after the reading of the will. He had in the meanwhile spent the whole of his five thousand pounds, ruined his tailor, and brought an honest eating-house

keeper to the verge of bankruptcy. He also died in debt to the amount of seven thousand pounds; so that, as Mr. Horace Walpole was heard to say, he at least went out of the world with credit.

William, the youngest of the brothers, after a cautious examination of his prospects from every point of view, decided to carry on at least a part of the business. To this end, he entered into partnership with his late father's managing clerk, an invaluable person, who had been in old Jacob's confidence for more than thirty years, and, now that his employer was dead, was thought to know more about indigo than any other man in London. He had also a snug sum in the Funds, and an only daughter, who kept house for him at Islington. When Mr. Will had ascertained the precise value of this young lady's attractions, he proposed a second partnership, was accepted, and married her. The fruit of this marriage was a son named Charles, born in 1770, who became in time his father's partner and successor, and in whose hands the old Trefalden house flourished bravely. This Charles, marrying late in life, took to wife the second daughter of a rich East India Director, with twelve thousand pounds for her fortune. She brought him four sons, the eldest of whom, Edward, born in 1815, was destined to indigo from his cradle. The second and third died in childhood, and the youngest, named William, after his grandfather, was born in 1822, and educated for the law.

The father of these young men died suddenly in 1844, just as old Jacob Trefalden had died more than eighty years before. He was succeeded in Basinghall-street by his eldest son. The new principal was, how-

ever, a stout, apathetic bachelor of self-indulgent habits, languid circulation, and indolent physique — a mere Roi Fainéant, without a Martel to guide him. He reigned only six years, and died of a flow of turtle soup to the head, in 1850, leaving his affairs hopelessly involved, and his books a mere collection of Sibylline leaves which no accountant in London was Augur enough to decipher. With him expired the mercantile house of Trefalden; and his brother, the lawyer, now became the only remaining representative of the youngest branch of the family.

For the elder branch we must go back again to 1760.

Honest Captain Jacob, upon whom had now devolved the responsibility of perpetuating the Trefalden name, took his five thousand pounds with a sigh; wisely relinquished all thought of disputing the will; sold his commission; emigrated to a remote corner of Switzerland; bought land, and herds, and a quaint little mediæval chateau surmounted by a whole forest of turrets, gable-ends, and fantastic weather-cocks; and embraced the patriarchal life of his adopted country. Switzerland was at that time the most peaceful, the best governed, and the least expensive spot in Europe. Captain Jacob, with his five thousand pounds, was a *millionaire* in the Canton Grisons. He was entitled to a seat in the Diet, if he chose to take it; and a vote if he chose to utter it; and he interchanged solemn half-yearly civilities with the stiffest old Republican aristocrats in Chur and Thusis. But it was not for these advantages that he valued his position in that primitive place. He loved ease, and liberty, and the open air. He loved the simple, pastoral, homely life of the people. He loved

to be rich enough to help his poorer neighbours — to be able to give the pastor a new cassock, or the church a new font, or the young riflemen of the district a silver watch to shoot for, when the annual Schützen Fest came round. He could not have done all this in England, heavily taxed and burthened as England then was, upon two hundred and fifty pounds a year. So the good soldier framed his commission, hung up his sword to rust over the dining-room chimney-piece, and planted and drained, sowed and reaped, shot an occasional chamois, and settled down for life as a Swiss country gentleman. Living thus, with the wife of his choice, and enjoying the society of a few kindly neighbours, he became the happy father of a son and two daughters, between whom, at his death, he divided his little fortune, share and share alike, according to his own simple notions of justice and love. The daughters married and settled far away, the one in Italy, the other on the borders of Germany. The son, who was called Henry, and born in 1762, inherited his third of the patrimony, became a farmer, and married at twenty years of age. He was necessarily a much poorer man than his father. Two thirds of the best land had been sold to pay off his sisters' shares in the property; but he kept the old château (though he dwelt in only a corner of it), and was none the less respected by his neighbours. Here he lived frugally and industriously, often driving his own plough, and branding his own sheep; and here he brought up his two sons, Saxon and Martin, the first of whom was born in 1783, and the second in 1786. They were all the family he reared. Other children were born to him from time to time, and played about his hearth, and gladdened the

half-deserted little château with their baby laughter; but they all died in earliest infancy, and the violets grew thickly over their little graves in the churchyard on the hill.

Now Henry Trefalden knew right well that one of these boys, or a descendant of one of these boys, must inherit the great legacy by-and-by. He knew, too, that it was his duty to fit them for that gigantic trust as well as his poor means would allow, and he devoted himself to the task with a love and courage that never wearied. To make them honest, moderate, charitable, and self-denying; to teach them (theoretically) the true uses of wealth; to instruct them thoroughly in the history and laws of England; to bring them up, if possible, with English sympathies; to keep their English accent pure; to train them in the fear of God, the love of knowledge, and the desire of excellence — this was Henry Trefalden's lifelong task, and he fulfilled it nobly.

His boys throve alike in body and in mind. They were both fine fellows; brave, simple, and true. Neither of them would have told a lie to save his life. Saxon was fair, as a Saxon should be. Martin was dark-eyed and olive-skinned like his mother. Saxon was the more active and athletic; Martin the more studious. As they grew older, Saxon became an expert mountaineer, rifle-shot, and chamois-hunter; Martin declared his wish to enter the Lutheran church. So the elder brother stayed at home, ploughing and planting, sowing and reaping, shooting and fishing, like his father and grandfather before him; and the younger trudged away one morning with his Alpen-stock in his hand, and his wallet on his back, bound for Geneva.

Time went on. Henry Trefalden died; young Saxon became the head of the family; and Martin returned from the University to accept a curacy distant about eight miles from home. By-and-by, the good old priest, who had been the boys' schoolmaster long years before, also passed away; and Martin became pastor in his native place. The brothers now lived with their mother in the dilapidated château, fulfilling each his little round of duties, and desiring nothing beyond them. They were very happy. That quiet valley was their world. Those Alps bounded all their desires. They knew there was a great legacy accumulating in England, which might fall to Saxon's share some day, if he lived long enough; but the time was so far distant, and the whole story seemed so dim and fabulous, that unless to laugh over it together in the evening, when they sat smoking their long pipes side by side under the trellised vines, the brothers never thought or spoke of the wealth which might yet be theirs. Thus more time went on, and old Madame Trefalden died, and the bachelor brothers were left alone in the little grey château. It was now 1830. In thirty more years the great legacy would fall due, and which of them might then be living to inherit it? Saxon was already a florid bald-headed mountaineer of forty-seven; Martin, a grey-haired priest of forty-four. What was to be done?

Sitting by their own warm hearth one bleak winter's evening, the two old bachelors took these questions into grave consideration. On the table between them lay a faded parchment copy of the alderman's last will and testament. It was once the property of worthy Captain Jacob, and had remained in the family ever

since. They had brought this out to aid their deliberations, and had read it through carefully, from beginning to end — without, perhaps, being very much the wiser.

"It would surely go to thee, Martin, if I died first," said the elder brother.

"Thou'lt not die first," replied the younger, confidently. "Thou'rt as young, Sax, as thou wert twenty years ago."

"But in the course of nature —"

"In the course of nature the stronger stuff outlasts the weaker. See how much heartier you are than myself?"

Saxon Trefalden shook his head.

"That's not the question," said he. "The real point is, *would* the money fall to thee? I think it would. It says here, '*in total exclusion of the younger branches of my family and their descendants.*' Mark that — 'the younger branches,' Martin. Thou'rt not a younger branch. Thou'rt of the elder branch."

"Ay, brother, but what runs before? Go back a line, and thou'lt see it says '*to the direct heir male of the eldest son of my eldest son.*' Now, thou'rt the eldest son of the eldest son, and I am not thy direct male heir. I am only thy younger brother."

"That's true," replied Saxon. "It seems to read both ways."

"All law matters seem to read both ways, Sax," said the priest; "and are intended to read both ways, 'tis my belief, for the confusion of the world. But why puzzle ourselves about the will at all? We can only understand the plain fact that thou art the direct heir, and that the fortune must be thine, thirty years hence, if thou'rt alive to claim it."

Saxon shrugged his broad shoulders, and lit his pipe with a fragment of blazing pine wood picked from the fire.

"Pish! at seventy-seven years of age, *if* I am alive!" he exclaimed. "Of what good would it be to me?"

Martin made no reply, and they were both silent for several minutes. Then the pastor stole a furtive glance at his brother, coughed, stared steadily at the fire, and said,

"There is but one course for it, Sax. Thou must marry."

"Marry!" echoed the stout farmer, all aghast.

The pastor nodded.

"Marry? At my time of life? At forty-sev— No, thank you, brother. Not if I know it."

"Our poor father always desired it," said Martin.

Saxon took no notice.

"And it is in some sense thy duty to provide an heir to this fortune which —"

"The fortune be —. I beg thy pardon, Martin; but what can it matter to thee or me what becomes of the fortune after we are both dead and gone? It would go to found charities, and do good somehow and somewhere. 'Twould be in better hands than mine, I'll engage."

"I am not so sure of that," replied the pastor. "Public charities do not always do as much good as private ones. Besides, I should like to think that a portion of that great sum might be devoted hereafter to the benefit of our poor brethren in Switzerland. I should like to think that by-and-by there might be a good road made between Tamins and Flims; and that

the poor herdsmen at Altfelden might have a chapel of their own, instead of toiling hither eight long miles every Sabbath: and that a bridge might be built over the Hinter Rhine down by Ortenstein, where poor Rütli's children were drowned last winter when crossing by the ferry."

Saxon smoked on in silence.

"All this might be done, and more," added the pastor, "if thou wouldst marry, and bring up a son to inherit the fortune."

"Humph!" ejaculated the farmer, looking very grim.

"Besides," said Martin, timidly, "we want a woman in the house."

"What for?" growled Saxon.

"To keep us tidy and civilised," replied the pastor. "Things were very different, Sax, when our dear mother was with us. The house does not look like the same place."

"There's old Lötsch," muttered Saxon. "He does as well as any woman. He cooks, makes bread —"

"Cooks?" remonstrated the younger brother. "Why, the kid to-day was nearly raw, and the mutton yesterday was baked to a cinder."

The honest farmer stroked his beard, and sighed. He could not contradict that stubborn statement. Martin saw his advantage, and followed it up.

"There is but one remedy," he said, "and that a plain one. As I told thee before, Sax, thou must marry. 'Tis thy duty."

"Whom can I marry?" faltered Saxon, dolefully.

"Well, I've thought of that, too," rejoined the pastor, in an encouraging tone. "There's the eldest

daughter of our neighbour Clauss. She is a good, prudent, housewifely maiden, and would suit thee exactly."

The elder brother made a wry face.

"She's thirty-five, if she's an hour," said he, "and no beauty."

"Brother Saxon," replied the pastor, "I am ashamed of thee. What does a sensible man of seven-and-forty want of youth and beauty in a wife? Besides, Marie Clauss is only thirty-two. I made particular inquiry about her age this morning."

"Why not marry her yourself, Martin?" said the farmer. "I'm sure that would do quite as well."

"My dear Saxon, only look again at the will, and observe that it is the direct heir male of the eldest son of the eldest son —"

Saxon Trefalden pitched his pipe into the fire, and sprang to his feet with an exclamation that sounded very like an oath.

"Enough, brother, enough!" he interrupted. "Say no more — put the will away — I'll go down to the Bergthal to-morrow, and ask her."

And so Saxon Trefalden put on his Sunday coat the following morning, and went forth like a lamb to the sacrifice.

"Perhaps she'll refuse me," thought he, as he knocked at Farmer Clauss's door, and caught a glimpse of the fair Marie at an upper casement.

But that inexorable virgin did nothing of the kind. She married him.

There were no ill-cooked dinners after that happy event had taken place. The old house became a marvel of cleanliness, and the bride proved herself a very

Phœnix of prudence and housewifery. She reformed everything — including the hapless brothers themselves. She banished their pipes, condemned old Carlo to his kennel, made stringent by-laws on the subject of boots, changed the hour of every meal, and, in short, made them both miserable. Worst of all, she was childless. This was their bitterest disappointment. They had given up their pipes, their peace, and their liberty, for nothing. Poor Martin always looked very guilty if any allusion happened to be made to this subject.

Matters went on thus for seven years, and then, to the amazement of the village, and the delight of the brothers, Madame Marie made her husband the happy father of a fine boy. Such a glorious baby was never seen! He had fair hair and blue eyes, and his father's nose; and they christened him Saxon; and the bells were rung; and the heir to the great fortune was born at last!

CHAPTER II.

Anno Domini 1860.

Two persons sat together in a first-floor room overlooking Chancery Lane. The afternoon sky was grey, and cold, and dull; and the room was greyer, colder, duller than the sky. Everything about the place looked sordid and neglected. The rain-channelled smoke of years had crusted on the windows. The deed-boxes on the shelves behind the door, the shabby books in the book-case opposite the fireplace, the yellow map that hung over the mantel-piece, the tape-

tied papers on the table, were all thickly-coated with white dust. There was nothing fresh or bright within those four walls, except a huge green safe with panelled iron doors and glittering scutcheons, fixed into a recess beside the fire-place. There were only two old-fashioned, horse-hair covered chairs in the room. There was not even a carpet on the floor. A more comfortless place could scarcely be conceived beyond the walls of a prison; and yet, perhaps, it was not more comfortless than such places generally are.

It was the private room of William Trefalden, Esquire, attorney at law, and it opened out from the still drearier office in which his clerks were at work. There was a clock in each room, and an almanack on each mantelshelf. The hands of both clocks pointed to half-past four, and the almanacks both proclaimed that it was the second day of March, A.D. eighteen hundred and sixty.

The two persons sitting together in the inner chamber were the lawyer and one of his clients. Placed as he was with his back to the window and his face partly shaded by his hand, Mr. Trefalden's features were scarcely distinguishable in the gathering gloom of the afternoon. His client — a stout, pale man, with a forest of iron-grey hair about his massive temples sat opposite, with the light full upon his face, and his hands crossed on the knob of his umbrella.

"I have come to talk to you, Mr. Trefalden," said he, "about that Castletowers mortgage."

"The Castletowers mortgage?" repeated Mr. Trefalden.

"Yes — I think I could do better with my money."

The lawyer shifted round a little farther from the light, and drew his hand a little lower over his eyes.

"What better do you think you could do with your money, Mr. Behrens?" he said, after a moment's pause. "It is an excellent investment. The Castletowers estate is burthened with no other incumberance; and what can you desire better than five per cent. secured on landed property?"

"I have nothing to say against it, as an investment," replied the client; "but — I prefer something else."

Mr. Trefalden looked up with a keen, enquiring glance.

"You are too wise a man, I am sure, Mr. Behrens," said he, "to let yourself be tempted by any unsafe rate of interest."

The client smiled grimly.

"*You* are too wise a man, I should hope, Mr. Trefalden," rejoined he, "to suspect Oliver Behrens of any such folly? No, the fact is that five per cent is no longer of such importance to me as it was seven years ago, and I have a mind to lay out that twenty-five thousand upon land."

"Upon land?" echoed the lawyer. "My dear sir, it would scarcely bring you three and a half per cent."

"I know that," replied the client. "I can afford it."

There was another brief silence.

"You will not give notice, I suppose," said Mr. Trefalden, quietly, "till you have seen something which you think likely to suit you."

"I have seen something already," replied Mr. Behrens.

"Indeed?"

"Yes; in Worcestershire — one hundred and thirty miles from London."

"Is that not somewhat far for a man of business, Mr. Behrens?"

"No, I have my box in Surrey, you know, adjoining the Castletowers grounds."

"True. Have you taken any steps towards this purchase."

"I have given your address to the lawyers in whose care the papers are left, and have desired them to communicate with you upon the subject. I trust to you to see that the title is all as it should be."

Mr. Trefalden slightly bent his head.

"I will give you my best advice upon it," he replied. "In the meantime, I presume, you would wish to give notice of your desire to call in your money."

"Precisely what I came here to do."

Mr. Trefalden took up a pen, and an oblong slip of paper.

"You will allow twelve months, of course?" said he interrogatively.

"Certainly not. Why should I? Only six are stipulated for in the deed."

"True; but courtesy ——"

"Tush! this is a matter of law, not courtesy," interrupted the client.

"Still, I fear it would prove a serious inconvenience to Lord Castletowers," remonstrated the lawyer. "Twenty-five thousand pounds is a large sum."

"Lord Castletowers's convenience is nothing to me," replied the other, abruptly. "I'm a man of the people, Mr. Trefalden. I have no respect for coronets."

"Very possible, Mr. Behrens," said Trefalden, in

the same subdued tone; "but you may remember that your interest has been paid with scrupulous regularity, and that it is a very hard matter for a poor nobleman — Lord Castletowers *is* poor — to find so heavy a sum as twenty-five thousand pounds at only six months' notice."

"He did not think it too short when he gave me the bond," said Mr. Behrens.

"He wanted money," replied Mr. Trefalden, with a scarcely perceptible shrug of the shoulders.

"Well, and now *I* want it. Come, come, Mr. Trefalden, Lord Castletowers is your client, and no doubt you would like to oblige him; but I am your client too — and a better one than he is, I'll be bound!"

"I trust, Mr. Behrens, that I should never seek to oblige one client at the expense of another," said the lawyer, stiffly. "If you think that I would, you wrong me greatly."

"I think, sir, that, like most other folks, you have more respect for a lord than a woolstapler," answered the man of the people, with a hard smile; "but I don't blame you for it. You're a professional man, and all professional men have those prejudices."

"I beg your pardon," said Mr. Trefalden. "I have none. I am the son of a merchant, and my family have all been merchants for generations. But this is idle. Let us proceed with our business. I am to take your instructions, Mr. Behrens, to serve Lord Castletowers with a notice of your determination to foreclose the mortgage in six months' time, if your mortgage money is not repaid?"

Mr. Behrens nodded, and the lawyer made a note of the matter.

"I am also to understand that should Lord Castletowers request a further delay of six months, you would not be disposed to grant it?"

"Certainly not."

Mr. Trefalden laid his pen aside.

"If he can't find the money," said the woolstapler, "let him sell the old place. I'll buy it."

"Shall I tell his lordship so?" asked Mr. Trefalden, with a slight touch of sarcasm in his voice.

"If you like. But it won't come to that, Mr. Trefalden. You're a rich man — aha! you needn't shake your head — you're a rich man, and you'll lend him the money."

"Indeed you are quite mistaken, Mr. Behrens," replied the lawyer, rising. "I am a very poor man."

"Ay, you say so, of course; but I know what the world thinks of your poverty, Mr. Trefalden. Well, good morning. You're looking pale, sir. You work too hard, and think too much. That's the way with you clever saving men. You should take care of yourself."

"Pshaw! how can a bachelor take care of himself?" asked Mr. Trefalden, with a faint smile.

"True; you should look out for an heiress."

The lawyer shook his head.

"No, no," said he, "I prefer my liberty. Good morning."

"Good morning."

Mr. Trefalden ushered his client through the office, listened for a moment to his heavy footfall going down the stairs, hastened back to his private room, and shut the door.

"Good God!" exclaimed he, in a low agitated tone, "what's to be done now? This is ruin — ruin!"

He took three or four restless turns about the room, then flung himself into his chair, and buried his face in his hands.

"He might well say that I looked pale," muttered he. "I felt pale. It came upon me like a thunder-stroke. *I* a rich man, indeed! *I* with twenty-five thousand pounds at command! Merciful powers! what can I do? To whom can I turn for it? What security have I to give? Only six months' notice, too. I am lost! I am lost!"

He rose, and went to the great safe beside the fire-place. His hand trembled so that he could scarcely fit the key to the lock. He threw back one of the heavy iron-panelled doors, and brought out a folded parchment, with the words "*Deed of* MORTGAGE *between Gervase Leopold Wynnecliffe, Earl of Castletowers, and Oliver Behrens, Esq., of Bread Street, London,*" written upon the outer side. Opening this document upon the desk, he resumed his seat, and read it carefully through from beginning to end. As he did so, the trouble deepened and deepened on his face, and his cheek grew still more deathly. When he came to the signature at the end, he pushed it from him with a bitter sigh.

"Not a flaw in it!" he groaned. "No pretext for putting off the evil day for even a week beyond the time! What a fool I was to think I could ever replace it! And yet what could I do? I wanted it. If it were to do again to-morrow, I should do it. Yes, by Heaven! I should, be the consequences what they might."

He paused, rose again, took a letter from the table, and stood looking for some moments at the signature.

"Oliver Behrens!" he mused. "A bold hand, with something of the German character in that little twist at the top of the O—, a hand not difficult to imitate, either! If, now, one only dared to frame an endorsement — but then there are the witnesses —— No, no, impossible! Better expatriation than such a risk as that. If the worst comes to the worst, there's always America."

And with this he sank down into his chair again, rested his chin upon his open palms, and fell into a deep and silent train of thought.

CHAPTER III.

Resolved.

As William Trefalden sat in his little dismal private room, wearily thinking, the clouds in the sky parted towards the west, and the last gleam of daylight fell upon his face. Such a pale eager face as it was, too, with a kind of strange beauty in it that no merely vulgar eye would have seen at all. To the majority of persons, William Trefalden was simply a gentlemanly "clever-looking" man. Attracted by the upright wall of forehead, which literally overbalanced the proportions of his face, they scarcely observed the delicacy of his other features. The clear pallor of his complexion, the subtle moulding of his mouth and chin, were altogether disregarded by those superficial observers. Even his eyes, large, brown, luminous as they were, lost much of their splendour beneath that superincumbent weight

of brow. His age was thirty-eight; but he looked older. His hair was thick and dark, and sprinkled lightly here and there with silver. Though slender, he was particularly well made — so well made, that it seemed impossible to him to move ungracefully. His hands were white and supple; his voice low; his manner grave and polished. A very keen and practised eye might, perhaps, have detected a singular sub-current of nervous excitability beneath that gravity and polish — a nervous excitability which it had been the business of William Trefalden's whole life to conquer and conceal, and which none of those around him were Lavaters enough to discover. The ice of a studied reserve had effectually crusted over that fire. His own clerks, who saw him daily for three hundred and thirteen dreary days in every dreary year, had no more notion of their employer's inner life than the veriest strangers who brushed past him along the narrow footway of Chancery-lane. They saw him only as others saw him. They thought of him only as others thought of him. They knew that he had a profound and extensive knowledge of his profession, an iron will, and an inexhaustible reserve of energy. They knew that he would sit chained to his desk for twelve and fourteen hours at a time, when there was urgent business to be done. They knew that he wore a shabby coat, lunched every day on a couple of dry biscuits, made no friends, accepted no invitations, and kept his private address a dead secret, even from his head clerk. To them he was a grave, plodding, careful, clever man, somewhat parsimonious as to his expenditure, provokingly reticent as to his private habits, and evidently bent on the accumulation of riches. They were about as correct in their con-

clusions, as the conclave of cardinals which elected Pope Sixtus the Fifth for no other merits than his supposed age and infirmities.

Lost in anxious thought, William Trefalden sat at his desk, in the same attitude, till dusk came on, and the lamps were lighted in the thoroughfare below. Once or twice he sighed, or stirred uneasily; but his eyes never wandered from their fixed stare, and his head was never lifted from his hands. At length he seemed to come to a sudden resolution. He rose, rang the bell, crumpled up the memorandum which he had written according to Mr. Behrens's instructions, and flung it into the fire.

The door opened, and a red-headed clerk made his appearance.

"Let my office lamp be brought," said Mr. Trefalden, "and ask Mr. Keckwitch to step this way."

The clerk vanished, and was succeeded by Mr. Keckwitch, who came in with the lighted lamp in his hand.

"Put the shade over it, Keckwitch," exclaimed Mr. Trefalden, impatiently, as the glare fell full upon his face. "It's enough to blind one!"

The head clerk obeyed slowly, looking at his employer all the while from beneath his eyelashes.

"You sent for me, sir?" he asked, huskily.

He was a short, fat, pallid man, with no more neck than a Schiedam bottle. His eyes were small and almost colourless. His ears had held so many generations of pens that they stood out from his head like the handles of a classic vase; and his voice was always husky.

"Yes. Do you know where to lay your hand upon that old copy of my great-grandfather's will?"

"Jacob Trefalden of Basinghall street, seventeen hundred and sixty?"

Mr. Trefalden nodded.

The head clerk took the subject into placid consideration, and drummed thoughtfully with his fat fingers upon the most prominent portion of his waistcoat.

"Well, sir," he admitted, after a brief pause, "I won't say that I may not be able to find it."

"Do so, if you please. Who is in the office?"

"Only Mr. Gorkin."

"Desire Gorkin to run out and fetch me a Continental Bradshaw."

Mr. Keckwitch retired; despatched the red-headed clerk; took down a dusty deed-box from a still dustier corner cupboard; brought forth the old yellow parchment for which his employer had just inquired, and slipped the same within the lid of his desk. Having done this, he took an armful of mouldy deeds from another shelf of the same cupboard, and littered them all about the desk and floor. Just as he had completed these arrangements, Gorkin returned, breathless, with the volume in his hand, and Mr. Keckwitch took it in.

"And the copy?" said Mr. Trefalden, without lifting his eyes from an old book of maps over which he was bending.

"I am looking for it, sir," replied the head clerk.

"Very good."

"Gorkin may go, I suppose, sir? It's more than half-past five."

"Of course; and you too, when you have found the deed."

Mr. Keckwitch retired again, released the grateful Gorkin, placed himself at his desk, and proceeded with much deliberation to read the will.

"What's at the bottom of it?" muttered he, presently, as he paused with one fat finger on the opening sentence. "What's wrong? Something. I heard it in his voice. I saw it in his face. And he knew I should see it, too, when he called out about the shade. What is it? What's he peering into those maps about? Why does he want this copy? He never asked for it before. There ain't a farthing coming to him, I know. I've read it before. But I'll read it again, for all that. A man can never know too much of his employer's private affairs. Not much chance of learning a great deal of his, either. Confounded private he keeps 'em."

He read on a little farther, and then paused again.

"Why did he send for that Continental Bradshaw?" he questioned to himself. "Why can I go, too, when there's plenty to be done here, and he knows it? He wants me gone — why? Where's he goin' himself? What's he up to? Abel Keckwitch, Abel Keckwitch, my best of friends, keep your right eye open!"

And with this apostrophe he returned to the deed, and proceeded with it sedulously.

"Well, Keckwitch," cried Mr. Trefalden, from the inner room, "have found the copy?"

"Not yet, sir," replied the trusty fellow, who was then rather more than half way through it. "But I've turned out a boxful of old parchments, and I think I shall be sure — —"

"Enough. Look closely for it, and bring it as soon as it turns up."

"It will turn up," murmured Mr. Keckwitch, "as soon as I have finished it."

And so it did, about five minutes after, when Mr. Keckwitch made his appearance with it at his master's door.

"Found? That's right!" exclaimed the lawyer, putting out his hand eagerly.

"I won't be sure, sir, till you've looked at it," replied the head clerk, with becoming modesty.

Mr. Trefalden's fingers closed on the parchment, but his eyes flashed keenly into the lustreless orbs of Mr. Abel Keckwitch, and rested there a moment before they reverted to the endorsement.

"Humph!" said he, in a slightly altered tone. "Yes — it's quite right, thank you. Good night."

"Good night, sir."

Mr. Trefalden looked after him suspiciously, and continued to do so, even when the door had been closed between them.

"The man's false," said he. "None but spies have so little curiosity. I shouldn't wonder if he's read every line."

Then he rose, locked the door, trimmed the lamp, dismissed the subject from his thoughts, and began to read the will. As he read, his brow darkened, and his lip grew stern. Presently he pushed the deed aside, and jotted down row after row of cyphers on a piece of blotting-paper. Then he went back to the deed, and back again to the cyphers, and every moment the frown settled deeper and deeper on his brow. Such a complex train of hopes and doubts, speculations and

calculations as were traversing the mazes of that busy brain! Sometimes he pondered in silence. Sometimes he muttered through his teeth; but so inaudibly that had there even been a listener at the door (as perhaps there was) that listener would not have been a syllable the wiser.

He took up a little almanack printed on a card, and glanced at the number of days intervening between the fourth and twenty-second of March. There were just eighteen. Just eighteen days to the expiration of this long, long century, during which Jacob Trefalden's half million had been accumulating, interest upon interest — during which whole generations had been born, and lived, and had passed away! Good Heavens! to what a sum it had grown. It amounted now to nine million, five hundred and fifty-two thousand, four hundred and odd pounds! Words — mere words! Words which no brain can distinctly realise. He might as well have tried to realise the distance between the sun and the earth. And this gigantic bequest was to be divided between a charity and an heir. Half! Even the half baffled him. Even the half amounted to four million, seven hundred and seventy-six thousand, two hundred and odd pounds. Pshaw! both were so immense, that the one produced no more effect upon his imagination than the other.

He took up his pen, and made a rapid calculation. Supposing it were taken as an income at five per cent.? Ha! one could grasp that, at all events. It would produce about two hundred and thirty-eight thousand pounds a year. Two hundred and thirty-eight thousand a year! A splendid revenue, truly; yet less than

the income enjoyed by many an English nobleman; and not one penny more than might be very easily and pleasantly spent by even a poor devil of an attorney like himself!

It might have been his own, that princely heritage — nay, would have been, but for the accursed accident of birth! It might have been his; and now to whom would it fall? To a stranger — an alien — probably to an uncultivated boor, ignorant of the very language of his forefathers! Oh, the bitter injustice of it! Had not *he* at least as fair a right to this wealth? Did not *he* stand in precisely the same degree of relationship to the giver of it? By what law of natural justice was the descendant of the eldest son to revel in superfluity, while he, the descendant of the youngest, stood on the brink of ruin? Had it even been left for division between the survivors, both might have been rich; but now — —

He rose, pale and agitated, and paced restlessly about the room.

But now, was it not evident that this heir was his born foe and despoiler, and had he not the right to hate him? Was not the hand of the desperate man against all men, even from the very beginning; but was it not first raised against those who had wronged him the deepest? William Trefalden was a desperate man. Had he not appropriated that twenty-five thousand pounds paid over to him by Lord Castletowers two years ago for the liquidation of the mortgage, and did not ruin and discovery stare him in the face? Having hazarded name and safety on one terrible die known only to himself, should he now hesitate to

declare war upon his enemy, who was the possessor of millions?

He smiled a strange smile of power and defiance, and ran his finger along the black lines on the map. From Dover to Calais — from Calais, by train, to Basle — Basle to Zürich — Zürich to Chur. At Chur the railways terminate. It could not be far beyond Chur where these emigrant Trefaldens dwelt. It would take him three days to get there, perhaps three and a half — perhaps four. He would start to-morrow.

His decision once taken, William Trefalden became in a moment cool and methodical as ever. All trace of excitement vanished from his face, as a breath clears from the surface of a mirror. He thrust the Bradshaw in his pocket, scribbled a hasty note to his head clerk, carefully burned the cyphered blotting-paper in the flame of the candle, and watched it expire among the dead ashes in the fireplace; locked his desk; tried the fastenings of the safe; glanced at the clock, and prepared to be gone.

"A quarter to seven already!" exclaimed he, as he unlocked the door. "I shall be late to-night!"

He had spoken aloud, believing himself alone, but stopped at the sight of Mr. Keckwitch, busily writing.

"You here, Keckwitch!" he said, frowning. "I told you you might go."

"You did, sir," replied the scribe, placidly; "but there was Heywood and Bennett's deed of partnership to be drawn up, so I would not take advantage of your kindness."

Trefalden bit his lip.

"I had just written a line to you," he said, "to let

you know that I am going out of town for a fortnight. Forward all letters marked private."

"Where to, sir?"

"You will find the address here."

And Mr. Trefalden tossed the note down upon the clerk's desk, and turned towards the door.

"Glad you're going to allow yourself a little pleasure for once, sir," observed Mr. Keckwitch, without the faintest gleam of surprise or curiosity on his impassive countenance. "Begging pardon for the liberty."

His employer hesitated for an instant before replying.

"Thank you," he said, "but pleasure is not my object. I go to visit a relation whom I have neglected too long. Good night."

With this he passed from the room, and went slowly down the stairs. In the passage he paused to listen; and when in the street, stepped out into the middle of the thoroughfare to look up at the windows.

"Strange!" muttered he; "but I never suspected that fellow so strongly as I do to-night!"

He then glanced right and left, buttoned his coat across his chest, for the March wind blew keenly, and walked briskly up the lane, in the direction of Holborn. As he neared the top of the street, close to its junction with the great thoroughfare, a thought struck him, and he flung himself back, by a rapid movement, into the recess of an old-fashioned doorway. There was no lamp within several yards. The doorway was dark and deep as a sentry box. There, with eager ear and bated breath, he waited.

Presently, apart from the deep hum of traffic close by, he heard a footstep coming up — a footstep so

light and swift that at first he thought he must be mistaken. Then his practised ear detected a labouring wheeze in the breath of the runner.

"The scoundrel!" ejaculated he, poised his right arm, set his teeth, and stood ready for a spring.

The signals of distress grew more distinct — the step slackened, ceased — drew near again — and Mr. Abel Keckwitch, panting and bewildered, made his appearance just opposite the doorway, evidently baffled by the disappearance of its occupant.

He was not long left in doubt. Swift as a panther, William Trefalden swooped down upon his man, and dealt him a short powerful blow that sent him reeling, pale and giddy, against the wall. It was surprising what muscles of steel and knuckles of iron lay *perdu* beneath the white superficies of that supple hand.

"Dog!" said he, fiercely, "do you dare to spy at my heels? This is not the first time I've suspected you; but I advise you to let it be the last time I convict you. Ay, you may scowl, but, by the Heaven above me! if I catch you at this game again, you'll repent it to your dying day. There! be thankful that I let you off so cheaply."

And having said this, William Trefalden walked coolly away without vouchsafing so much as a glance to a couple of delighted boys who stood watching the performance from the opposite side of the street.

As for Abel Keckwitch, he recovered his breath and his equilibrium as well as he could, though the former was a matter of time, and caused him to sit down, ignominiously, on the nearest doorstep. When, at length, he was in a condition to retrace his steps, he

rose, shook his fat fist in a passion of impotent rage, and indulged in a volley of curses, not loud but deep.

"I'll be even with you," gasped he, more huskily than ever. "I'll be even with you, Mr. Trefalden, if I die for it! You've something to hide, but you shan't hide it from me. I'll know where you live, and what you do with your money. I'll find out the secret of your life before I've done with you, and then let us see which will be master!"

CHAPTER IV.

The Chateau Rotzberg.

Amid the many hundred miles which it traverses from its source in the glacier-land to its dispersion among the border flats of the Zuyder Zee, the great Rhine river flows through no district so full of strange interest, so wild, so primitive, so untrodden, as that deep and lonely valley that lies between Chur and Thusis in the Canton Grisons. The passing traveller hastening on to the Splügen, the wandering artist eager for Italy, alike hurry past with scarce a glance or a thought for the grey peaks above, or the stony river-bed below, the beaten highway. They little guess what green delicious valleys, what winding ravines, what legend-haunted ruins, and fragrant uplands jewelled with Alp-roses and purple-gentian blossoms, lie all unsought among the slopes and passes of the mountains round about. Still less do they dream that to some of those crumbling towers from which the very ivy has long since withered away, there cling traditions many centuries older than Christ; or that in yonder scattered

châlets, some of which cluster like swallows' nests on shelves of granite six or eight hundred feet above the level of the valley, there is yet spoken a language unknown to the rest of Europe. Only the historian and archæologist care to remember how there lie embedded in that tongue the last fragments of a forgotten language; and how in the veins of the simple mountaineers who speak it, there yet linger some drops of the blood of a lost, a mighty, and a mysterious people.

Thus it happened that William Trefalden, who was neither an archæologist nor a historian, but only a brilliant, unscrupulous man of the world, every fibre of whose active brain was busy just then with a thousand projects, neither knew, nor cared to know any of these things; but took his way up the valley of Domleschg without bestowing a thought upon its people or traditions.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon of the fourth day from that on which he left London. He had been on the road two nights out of the three; and yet his eye looked none the less bright, and his cheek none the paler. As he strode along in the deep shade, glancing up from time to time at the sunny heights above his head, his step grew freer, and his bearing more assured than usual. There was not a soil of travel on his garments. The shabby office coat so inseparably associated with its wearer in the minds of his clerks, was discarded for a suit of fashionable cut and indefinite hue, such as the British tourist delighteth to honour. His gloves and linen were faultless. Even his boots, although he was on foot, were almost free from dust. He looked, in short, so well dressed, and so unlike his daily self, that it may be doubted whether

even Mr. Abel Keckwitch would have recognised his employer at the first glance, if that astute head-clerk could by any possibility have met him on the way.

Absorbed in thought as he was, however, Mr. Trefalden paused every now and then to reconnoitre the principal features of the valley, and make certain of his landmarks. The village from which he had started was already left two miles behind; and, save a ruined watch-tower on a pedestal of rock some eighty feet above the level of the road, there was no accessible building in sight. The Hinter Rhine, with its grey waters still dull from the glacier, ran brawling past him all the way. There were pine forests climbing up the spurs of the mountains; and flocks of brown goats, with little tinkling bells about their necks, browsing over the slopes lower down. Far above the sound of these little bells, uplifted, as it were, upon gigantic precipices of bare granite, rose, terrace beyond terrace, a whole upper world of pasture lands, cultivated fields, mossy orchards, and tiny hamlets, which, seen from the valley, looked like carved toys scattered over the sward. Higher still came barren plateaus, groups of stunted firs, and rugged crags, still thickly sheeted with snow; while far away to the right, where another valley seemed to open westward, rose a mountain loftier than all the rest, from the summit of which a vast glacier hung over in icy folds that glittered to the sun, like sculptured drapery depending from the shoulder of some colossal statue.

But William Trefalden had no eyes for this grand scene. To him, at that moment, the mountains were but sign-posts, and the sun a lamp to light him on his

way. He was seeking for a certain roadside shrine behind which, he had been told, he should find a path leading to the Château Rotzberg. He knew that he had not yet passed the shrine, and that by this time he must be near it. Presently a chapel-bell chimed from the heights, clear, and sweet, and very distant. He paused to glance at his watch, and then pressed forward more rapidly. It was already a quarter to three, and he was anxious to reach his destination before the afternoon should grow much later. There was an abrupt curve in the road a few yards further on. He had been looking forward to this point for some minutes, and felt so sure that it must bring him in sight of the path, that when it actually did so, he struck up at once through the scattered pines that fringed the waste ground to the left of the road, and trod the beaten track, as confidently as if he were familiar with every foot of the way.

As he went on, the sound of the hurrying river died away, and the scattered pines became a thick plantation, fragrant and dusky. Then the ground grew hilly, and was broken up here and there by mossy boulders; and then came open daylight again, and a space of smooth sward, and a steep pathway leading up to another belt of pines. This second plantation was so precipitous that the path had in some places been laid down with blocks of rough stone, and short lengths of pine trunks, so as to form a kind of primitive staircase up the mountain-side. The ascent, however, was short, though steep, and Mr. Trefalden had not been climbing it for many minutes before he saw a bright shaft of sunlight piercing the fringed boughs some few yards in advance. Then the moss became

suddenly golden beneath his feet, and he found himself on the verge of an open plateau, with the valley lying in deep shade some four hundred feet below. There ran the steel-grey river, eddying but inaudible; there opened the broad Rheinthal, leading away mile after mile into the dim distance, with glimpses of white Alps on the horizon; while close by, within fifty yards of the spot on which he was standing, rose the ivied walls of the Château Rotzberg.

This, then, was the home to which his great-grandfather's eldest son had emigrated one hundred years before — this, the birthplace of the heir at law! William Trefalden smiled somewhat bitterly, as he paused and looked upon it.

It was a thorough Swiss, mediæval dwelling, utterly irregular, and consisting apparently of a cluster of some five or six square turrets, no two of which were of the same size or height. They were surmounted alike by steep slated roofs and grotesque weathercocks; and the largest, which had been suffered to fall to ruin, was green with ivy from top to bottom. The rest of the château gave signs of only partial habitation. Many of the narrow windows were boarded up, while others showed a scrap of chintz on the inner side, or a flower-pot on the sill. A low wall enclosing a small courtyard lay to the south of the building, and was approached by a quaint old gateway supporting a sculptured scutcheon, close above which a stork had built his nest.

None of these details escaped the practised eye of William Trefalden. He saw all in a moment — poverty, picturesqueness, and neglect. As he crossed the open sward, and came in sight of a steep road winding up

from the valley on the other side, he remarked that there were no tracks of wheels upon it. Passing under the gateway, he observed how the heraldic bearings were effaced upon the shield, and how those fractures were such as could only have been dealt by the hand of man. Not even the grass that had sprung up amid the paving in the courtyard, nor the mossy penthouse over the well, nor the empty kennel in the corner, remained unnoticed as he went up to the door of the château.

It was standing partly open — a massy oaken portal, studded with iron stanchions, and protected only by a heavy latch. William Trefalden looked round for a bell, but there was none. Then he knocked with his clenched hand, but no one came. He called aloud, but no one answered. At last he went in.

The door opened into a stone hall of irregular shape, with a cavernous fireplace at one end, and a large modern window at the other. The ceiling was low, and the rafters were black with smoke. An old carved press, a screen, some chairs and settles of antique form, a great oak table on which lay a newspaper and a pair of clumsy silver spectacles, a curious Swiss clock with a toy skeleton standing in a little sentry-box just over the dial, a spinning-wheel and a linen-press, were all the furniture that it contained. A couple of heavy Tyrolean rifles, with curved stocks to fit to the shoulder, were standing behind the door, and an old sabre, a pair of antlers, and a yellow parchment in a black frame, hung over the mantelpiece. A second door, also partly open, stood nearly opposite the first, and led into a garden.

Having surveyed this modest interior from the threshold, and found himself alone there, Mr. Trefalden

crossed over to the fireplace and examined the parchment at his leisure. It was Captain Jacob's commission, signed and sealed by His Most Gracious Majesty King George the Second, Anno Domini seventeen hundred and forty-eight. Turning from this to the newspaper on the table, he saw that it was printed in some language with which he was not acquainted — a language that was neither French, nor Italian, nor Spanish, but which seemed to bear a vague resemblance to all three. It was entitled "Amity del Pievel." Having lingered over this journal with some curiosity, he laid it down again, and passed out through the second door into the garden.

Here, at least, he had expected to find some one belonging to the place; but it was a mere kitchen garden, and contained nothing higher in the scale of creation than cabbages and potatoes, gooseberry bushes, and beds of early salad. Mr. Trefalden began to ask himself whether his Swiss kindred had deserted the Château Rotzberg altogether.

Strolling slowly along a side path sheltered by a high privet hedge, and glancing back every now and then at the queer little turretted building with all its weathercocks glittering in the sun, he suddenly became aware of voices not far distant. He stopped — listened — went on a few steps farther — and found that they proceeded from some lower level than that on which he stood. Having once ascertained the direction of the sounds, he followed them rapidly enough. His quick eye detected a gap in the hedge at the upper end of the garden. From this gap, a flight of rough steps led down to a little orchard some eighteen or twenty feet below — a mere shelf of verdure on the face of the

precipice, commanding a glorious view all over the valley, and lying full to the sunset. It was planted thickly with fruit trees, and protected at the verge of the cliff by a fragile rail. At the farther end, built up in an angle of the rock, stood a rustic summer-house newly thatched with Indian corn-straw. Towards this point William Trefalden made his way through the deep grass and the wild flowers.

As he drew nearer, he heard the sounds again. There was but one voice now — a man's — and he was reading. What was he reading? Not German. Not that strange dialect printed in the "*Amity del Pievel.*" Certainly not Latin. He advanced a little farther. Was it, could it be — Greek?

Mr. Trefalden's Greek had grown somewhat rusty these last eighteen years or so; but there could be no mistake about those sonorous periods. He recognised the very lines as they fell from the lips of the speaker — lines sweet and strong as that god-like wine stored of old in the chamber of Ulysses. It was many and many a year since he had heard them, though at Eton they had been "familiar in his mouth as household words:"

> About our heads elms and tall poplars whispered;
> While from its rocky cave beside us trickled
> The sacred waters of a limpid fountain.
> The cricket chirped i' the hedge, and the sweet throstle
> Sang loudly from the copse.

Who should this be but Theocritus of Sicily? William Trefalden could scarcely believe his ears. Theocritus in the valley of Domleschg! Theocritus in the mouths of such outer barbarians as the dwellers in the Château Rotzberg?

Having ended the famous description of the garden of Phrasidamus, the reader paused. William Trefalden hastened up to the front of the summer-house. An old man smoking a German pipe, and a youth bending over a book, were its only occupants. Both looked up, and both, by a simultaneous impulse of courtesy, rose to receive him.

"I beg your pardon," he said, lifting his hat. "This is, I fear, an unceremonious intrusion; but I am not quite a stranger, and—"

He checked himself. French was the language which he had found generally understood in the Grisons, and he had inadvertently used his native English.

But the old man bowed, laid his pipe aside, and replied in English as pure as his own.

"Whoever you may be, sir, you are welcome."

"I think I have the pleasure of addressing a relative," observed the lawyer. "My name is William Trefalden."

The old man stepped forward, took him by both hands, and, somewhat to his surprise, kissed him on each cheek.

"Cousin," he said, "thou art thrice welcome. Saxon, my son, embrace thy kinsman."

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Trefalden and his Cousins become better acquainted.

MR. TREFALDEN took the rustic chair handed to him by his younger kinsman, and placed it just against the entrance to the summer-house. It was his habit, he said, to avoid a strong light, and the sunset dazzled him. The old man resumed his seat. The youth remained standing. Both looked at the new comer with a cordial, undissembled curiosity; and for a few seconds there was silence.

Mr. Trefalden's elder kinsman was fragile, pale, white-haired, with brilliant dark eyes, and thin sensitive lips, that trembled when he spoke earnestly. The other was a tall, broad-shouldered, broad-browed, powerful young fellow, with a boyish down upon his upper lip, and a forest of thick golden-brown hair, crisp and curly as the locks of Chaucer's Squire. His eyebrows and eye-lashes were some shades darker than his hair; and his eyes looked out from beneath them with an expression half shy, half fearless, such as we sometimes see in the eyes of children. In short, he was as goodly a specimen of the race of Adam as one might hope to meet with between London and the valley of Domleschg, or even farther; and this Mr. Trefalden could not but admit at the first glance.

The old man was the first to speak.

"You did not find your way without a guide, cousin?" said he.

"It was no very difficult achievement," replied the lawyer. "I enjoyed the walk."

"From Chur?"

"No — from Reichenau. I have taken up my quarters at the 'Adler.' My landlord described the road to me. It was easy enough to find; not, perhaps, quite so easy to follow."

"Ah, you came by the footpath. It is sadly out of repair, and would seem steep to a stranger. Saxon, go bid Kettli prepare supper; and open a bottle of d'Asti wine. Our cousin is weary."

Mr. Trefalden hastened to excuse himself; but it was of no avail. The old gentleman insisted that he should "at least break bread and drink wine" with them; and Mr. Trefalden, seeing that he attached some patriarchal import to this ceremony, yielded the point.

"You have a son, sir, of whom you may be proud," said he, looking after the youth as he strode away through the trees.

The old man smiled, and with the smile his whole face grew tender and gracious.

"He is my great hope and joy," he replied; "but he is not my son. He is the only child of my dear brother, who died twelve years ago."

Mr. Trefalden had already heard this down at Reichenau, but he said, "Indeed?" and looked interested.

"My brother was a farmer," continued the other; "I entered the Lutheran church. He married late in life; I have been a bachelor all my days."

"And your brother's wife," said Mr. Trefalden, "is she still living?"

"No; she died two years after she became a mother. For twelve years, Saxon has had no parent but myself. He calls me 'father' — I call him 'son.' I could not

love him more if he were really my own offspring. I have been his only tutor, also. I have taught him all that I know. Every thought of his heart is open to me. He is what God and my teaching have made him."

"He is a magnificent fellow, at all events," said Mr. Trefalden, drily.

"My brother was almost as tall and handsome at his age," replied the pastor, with a sigh.

"What *is* his age?" asked the lawyer.

"He was twenty-two on the thirtieth of last December."

"I should not have taken him to be more than twenty."

"Twenty-two — twenty-two years, and four months — a man in age, in stature, in strength, in learning; but a boy at heart, cousin — a boy at heart!"

"All the better for him," said Mr. Trefalden, with his quiet voice, and pleasant smile. "Many of the greatest men that ever lived were boys to the last."

"I have no desire to see my Saxon become a great man," said Martin Trefalden, hastily. "God forbid it! I have tried to make him a good man. That is enough."

"And I have no doubt that you have succeeded."

The old man looked troubled.

"I have tried," said he; "but I know not whether I have tried in the right way. I have trained him according to my own belief, and ideas; and what I have done has been done for the best. I may have acted wrongly. I may not have done my duty; but I have striven to do it. I prayed for light — I prayed for God's blessing on my work. I believed my prayers

were heard; but I have had heavy misgivings of late — heavy, heavy misgivings!"

"I feel sure they must be groundless," said Mr. Trefalden.

The pastor shook his head. He was evidently anxious, and ill at ease.

"That is because you do not know," replied he. "I cannot tell you now — another time — when we can be longer alone. In the meanwhile, I thank Heaven for the chance that has brought you hither. Cousin, you are our only surviving kinsman — you are acquainted with the world — you will advise me — you will be good to him! I am sure you will. I see it in your face."

"I shall be very glad to receive your confidence, and to give you what counsel I can," replied Mr. Trefalden.

"God bless you!" said the pastor, and shook hands with him across the table.

At this moment there came a sound of voices from the farther end of the terrace.

"One word more," cried Martin, eagerly. "You know our family history, and the date that is drawing near?"

"I do."

"Not a syllable before *him*, till we have again spoken together. Hush! he is here."

A giant shadow fell upon the grass, and young Saxon's six feet of substance stood between them and the sun. He held a dish in his hands and a bottle under his arm, and was followed by a stalwart peasant woman, laden with plates and glasses.

"The evening is so warm," said he, "that I thought

our cousin would prefer to stay here; so Kettli and I have brought the supper with us."

"Nothing could please me better," replied Mr. Trefalden. "By the way, Saxon, I must compliment you on your Greek. Theocritus is an old friend of mine, and you read him remarkably well."

The young man, who had just removed the book from the table, and was assisting to spread the cloth, blushed like a girl.

"He and Anacreon were my favourite poets," added the lawyer; "but that was a long time ago. I fear I now remember very little of either."

"I have not read Anacreon," said Saxon; "but of all those I know, I love Homer best."

"Ay, for the fighting," suggested his uncle, with a smile.

"Why not, when it's such grand fighting?"

"Then you prefer the Iliad to the Odyssey," said Mr. Trefalden. "Now, for my part, I always took more pleasure in the adventures of Ulysses. The scenery is so various and romantic; the fiction so delightful."

"I don't like Ulysses," said Saxon, bluntly. "He's so crafty."

"He is therefore all the truer to nature," replied Mr. Trefalden. "All Greeks are crafty; and Ulysses is the very type of his race."

"I cannot forgive him on that plea. A hero must be better than his race, or he is no hero at all."

"That is true, my son," said the pastor.

"I allow that the Homeric heroes are not Bayards; but they are great men," said Mr. Trefalden, defending

his position less for the sake of argument than for the opportunity of studying his cousin's opinions.

"Ulysses is not a great man," replied Saxon, warmly; "much less a hero."

Mr. Trefalden smiled, and shook his head.

"You have all the world against you," said he.

"The world lets itself be blinded by tradition," answered Saxon. "Can a man be a hero, and steal? a hero, and tell lies? a hero, and afraid to give his name? Tell of Altdorf was not one of that stamp. When Gessler questioned him about the second arrow, he told the truth, and was ready to die for it."

"You are an enthusiast on the subject of heroes," said Mr. Trefalden, jestingly.

The young man blushed again, more deeply than before.

"I hate Ulysses," he said. "He was a contemptible fellow; and I don't believe that Homer wrote the Odyssey at all."

With this he addressed some observation to Kettli, who answered him, and took her departure.

"What a strange dialect!" said Mr. Trefalden, his attention diverted into another channel. "Did I not see a newspaper printed in it, as I passed just now through the house?"

"You did; but it is no dialect," replied the pastor, as they took their places round the table. "It is a language — a genuine language; copious, majestic, elegant, and more ancient by many centuries than the Latin."

"You surprise me."

"Its modern name," continued the old man, "is the Rhæto-Romansch. If you desire to know its ancient

name, I must refer you back to a period earlier, perhaps, than even the foundation of Alba Longa, and certainly long anterior to Rome. But, cousin, you do not eat."

"I have really no appetite," pleaded Mr. Trefalden, who found neither the goat's-milk cheese nor the salad particularly to his taste. "Besides, I am much interested in what you tell you."

The pastor's face lighted up.

"I am glad of it," he said, eagerly. "I am very glad of it. It is a subject to which I have devoted the leisure of a long life."

"But you have not yet told me the ancient name of this Romansch tongue?"

Saxon, who had been looking somewhat uneasy during the last few minutes, was about to speak; but his uncle interposed.

"No, no, my son," he said, eagerly, "these are matters with which I am more conversant than thou. Leave the explanation to me."

The young man bent forward, and whispered, "Briefly, then, dearest father."

Mr. Trefalden's quick ear caught the almost inaudible warning. It was his destiny to gain more than one insight into character that evening.

The pastor nodded somewhat impatiently, and launched into what was evidently a favourite topic.

"Look round," he said, "at these mountains. They have their local names, as the Galanda, the Ringel, the Albula, and so forth; but they have also a general and classified name. They are the Rhætian Alps. Among them lie numerous valleys, of which this, the Hinter-Rhein-Thal is the chief. Yonder lie the passes

of the Splügen and the Stelvio, and beyond them the plains of Lombardy. You probably know this already; but it is important to my explanation that you should have a correct idea of our geography here in the Grisons."

Mr. Trefalden bowed, and begged him to proceed. Saxon ate his supper in silence.

"Well," continued the pastor, "about two thousand eight hundred years ago, these Alps were peopled by a hardy aboriginal race, speaking the same language, or the germs of the same language, which is spoken here to this day by their descendants. These aborigines followed the instincts which God would seem to have implanted in the hearts of all mountain races. They wearied of their barren fastnesses. They poured down into the southern plains. They expelled the native Umbrians, and settled as conquerors in that part of Italy which lies north of Ancona and the Tiber. There they built cities, cultivated literature and the arts, and reached a high degree of civilization. When I tell you that they had attained to this eminence before the era of Romulus; that they gave religion, language, and arts to Rome herself; that, according to the decreed fate of nations, they fell through their own luxury and were enslaved in their turn; that, pursued by the Gaul or the Celt, they fled back at last to these same mountains from which they had emigrated long centuries before; that they erected some of those strongholds, the imperishable ruins of which yet stand above our passes; and that in this Rhæto-Romansch tongue of the Grisons survive the last utterances of their lost poets and historians — when, cousin, I tell you all these things, you will, I think, have guessed already

what the name of that ancient people must have been?"

Now it happened, somewhat unluckily, that Mr. Trefalden had lately read, somewhere or another, a review of somebody's book on this very subject; so, when the old man paused, quite warm and flushed with his own eloquence, he found himself prepared with a reply.

"If," said he, "I had not taken an impression — if, in short, I had had not understood that the Etruscans were originally a Lydian tribe ——"

"You took that impression from Herodotus!" interrupted the pastor.

"No; for the best of reasons. I never was Grecian enough to do battle with Herodotus."

"From Tacitus, then?"

"Possibly from Tacitus."

"Yes, Tacitus supports that theory, but he is wrong; so does Herodotus, and he is wrong; so do Strabo, Cicero, Seneca, Pliny, Plutarch, Velleius Paterculus, Servius, and a host of others, and they are all wrong — utterly wrong, every one of them!"

"But where ——"

"Livy supposes that the emigration was from the plains to the mountains — folly, mere folly! Does not every example in history point to the contrary? The dwellers in plains fly to the mountains for refuge; but emigration flows as naturally from the heights to the flats, as streams flow down from the glaciers to the valleys. Hellanicus of Lesbos would have us believe they were Pelasgians. Dionysius of Halicarnassus asserts that they were the aborigines of the soil. Gorius

makes them Phœnician — Bonarota, Egyptian — Maffei, Canaanite — Guarnacci ——"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Mr. Trefalden; "but when I said I had understood that the Etruscans were of Lydian origin ——"

"They were nothing of the kind!" cried the pastor, trembling with excitement. "If they had been his countrymen, would not Xantus of Lydia have chronicled the event? He never even names them. Can you conceive an English historian omitting the colonisation of America; or a Spanish historian passing over the conquest of Mexico? No, cousin, you must forgive me for saying that he who embraces the empty theories of Herodotus and Tacitus commits a grievous error. I can show you such archæological evidence ——"

"I assure you," said Mr. Trefalden, laughingly, "that I have not the least disposition to do anything of the kind. It is a subject upon which I know absolutely nothing."

"And, farther," began Saxon, laying his hand gently on the old man's arm, "I think you forget ——"

"No, no, I forget nothing," interrupted his uncle, too much possessed by his own argument to listen to any one. "I do not forget that Gibbon pronounced the Lydian theory a theme for only poets and romancists. I do not forget that Steub, whatever the tenor of his other opinions, at least admitted the unity of the Etruscan and Rhætian tongues. Then there was Niebuhr — although *he* fell under the mistake of supposing the Etruscan to be a mixed race, he believed the Rhætians of these Alps to have been the true stock, and maintained that they reduced the Pelasgi to a state of

vassalage. Niebuhr was a great man, a fine historian, an enlightened scholar. I corresponded with him, cousin, for years, on this very subject; but I could never succeed in convincing him of the purely Rhætian nationality of the Etruscan people. He always would have it that they were amalgamated with the Pelasgians. It was a great pity! I wish I could have set him right before he died."

Mr. Trefalden looked at his watch.

"I wish you could," he said; "but it grows late, and I shall never find my way back before dark, if I do not at once bid you good evening."

The pastor put his hand to his brow in a bewildered way.

"I — I fear I have talked too much," he said, shyly. "I have wearied you. Pray forgive me. When I begin upon this subject, I do not know where to stop."

"That is because you know so much about it," replied the lawyer. "But I have listened with great pleasure, I assure you."

"Have you? Have you, indeed?"

"And have learned a great deal that I did not know before."

"I will show you all Niebuhr's letters, another time, and copies of my replies," said the old man, "if you care to read them."

He was now quite radiant again, and wanted only a word of encouragement to resume the conversation; but Mr. Trefalden had had more than enough of the Etruscans already.

"Thank you," said he; "thank you — another time. And now, good-by."

"No, no — stay a moment longer. I have so much to say to you — so many questions to ask. How long do you stay in Reichenau?"

"Some days — perhaps a week."

"Are you on your way to Italy?"

"Not at all. I wanted change of air, and I have come abroad for a fortnight's holiday. My object in choosing Reichenau for a resting-place, is solely to be near you."

The old man's eyes filled with tears.

"How good of you!" he said simply. "I should never have seen you if you had not found your way hither — and, after all, we three are the last of our name. Cousin, will you come here?"

Mr. Trefalden hesitated.

"What do you mean?" he said. "I shall come again, of course, to-morrow."

"I mean, will you come here for the time of your stay? I hardly like to ask you, for I know the 'Adler' is far more comfortable than our little desolate eyrie. But still, if you can put up with farmer's fare and mountain habits, you shall have a loving welcome."

Mr. Trefalden smiled, and shook his head.

"I thank you," said he, "as much as if I accepted your hospitality; but it is impossible. We Londoners lead busy feverish lives, and become enslaved by all kinds of unhealthy customs. Your habits and mine differ as widely as the habits of an Esquimaux and a Friendly Islander. Shall I confess the truth? You have just supped — I am now going back to Reichenau to dinner."

"To dinner?"

"Yes, seven is my hour. I cannot depart from it,

even when travelling; so you see I dare not become your guest. However, I shall see you daily, and my young cousin here must do the honours of the neighbourhood to me."

"That I will," said Saxon, heartily.

Mr. Trefalden then shook hands with the pastor, and, Saxon having declared his intention of seeing him down the mountain, they went away together.

CHAPTER VI.

The Value of a Napoleon.

As the two cousins passed across the grass-grown court-yard, and under the gateway with the stork's nest overhead, Mr. Trefalden pointed up to the broken scutcheon.

"Is that a record of some mediæval fray?" asked he.

"Oh dear no!" replied the young man, laughingly. "My great-grandfather smashed that heraldry when he bought the place."

"Then he was a zealous Republican?"

"Not he. Quite the contrary, I believe. No — he defaced the shield because the château was his, and the arms were not."

"I see. He did not choose to live in a house with another man's name upon his door. That was sensible; but he might have substituted his own."

Saxon's lip curled saucily.

"Bah!" said he, "what do we want with arms? We are only farmers. We have no right to them."

"Neither has anyone else, I should fancy, in a republic like this," observed Mr. Trefalden.

"Oh, yes — some have. The Rotzbergs, who lived here before us, the Plantas, the Ortensteins, are all noble. They were counts and knights hundreds of years ago, when the feudal system prevailed."

"Nobles who subscribe to a democratic rule forego their nobility, my young cousin," said Mr. Trefalden.

"I have heard that before," replied Saxon; "but I don't agree with it."

This young man had a sturdy way of expressing his opinions that somewhat amused and somewhat dismayed Mr. Trefalden. He had also a frightful facility of foot that rendered him a difficult companion among such paths as led down from the Château Rotzberg to the valley below.

"My good fellow," said the lawyer, coming to a sudden stop, "do you want me to break my neck? I'm not a chamois!"

Saxon, who had been springing from ledge to ledge of the slippery descent with the light and fearless step of a mountaineer to the manner born, turned back at once, and put out his hand.

"I beg your pardon," he said, apologetically. "I had forgotten. I suppose you have never been among mountains before?"

"Oh yes, I have — and I can keep my feet here quite well, thank you, if you do not ask me to come down in coranto. I have been up Snowdon, and Cader Idris, and plenty of smaller heights — to say nothing of Holborn Hill."

Saxon laughed merrily.

"Why, what do *you* know of Holborn Hill?" said Mr. Trefalden, surprised to find that small jest appreciated.

"It is a hill rising westward, on the right bank of the Fleet river."

"But you have never visited London?"

"I have never been farther than Zürich in my life; but I have read Stowe carefully, with a map."

Mr. Trefalden could not forbear a smile.

"You must not suppose that you therefore know anything about modern London," said he. "Stowe would not recognise his own descriptions now. The world has gone round once or twice since his time."

"So I suppose."

"I should like to take you back with me, Saxon. You'd find me a better guide than the mediæval surveyor."

"To London?"

"Ay, to London."

Saxon shook his head.

"You do not mean to tell me that you have no curiosity to visit the most wonderful city in the world?"

"Not at all; but there are others which I had rather see first."

"And which are they?"

"Rome, Athens, and Jerusalem."

"Then I have no hesitation in prophecying that you would be greatly disappointed in all three. One is always disappointed in places that depend for their interest on remote association."

Saxon made no reply, and for a few moments they were both silent. When they presently left the last belt of pines behind them and emerged upon the level road, Mr. Trefalden paused and said: —

"I ought not to let you go any farther. My way lies straight before me now, and I cannot miss it."

"I will go with you as far as the bridge," replied Saxon.

"But it is growing quite dusk, and you have those mountain paths to climb."

"I could climb them blindfolded. Besides, we have arranged nothing for to-morrow. Would you like to walk over the Galanda to Pfeffers?"

"How far is it?" asked Mr. Trefalden, with a glance of misgiving towards the mountain in question, which looked loftier than ever in the gloaming.

"About twenty-three or four miles."

"Each way?"

"Of course."

"I am much obliged to you," said the lawyer, "but, as I said before, I am not a chamois. No, Saxon; you must come over to the 'Adler' to-morrow morning to breakfast with me, and after breakfast, if you like, we will walk to Chur. I hear it is a curious old place, and I should like to see it."

"As you please, cousin. At what hour?"

"I fear if I say half-past eight you will think it terribly late."

"Not at all, since you do not dine till eight at night."

"Then I may expect you?"

"Without fail."

They were now within sight of the covered bridge and the twinkling lights in the village beyond. Mr. Trefalden paused for the second time.

"I must insist upon saying good-by now," said he. "And, by the way, before we part, will you be kind enough to explain to me the real value of these [illegible]?"

He took out a handful of loose money, and Saxon examined the pieces by the waning light.

"My charretier to-day would not take French francs," continued Mr. Trefalden, "but asked for Müntz money. When I offered him these Swiss francs he was satisfied. What is the difference in value between a French and a Swiss franc? What is Müntz money? How many of these pieces should I get for a Napoleon, or an English sovereign?"

Saxon shook his head.

"I don't know," said he. "I have not the least idea."

Mr. Trefalden thought he had been misunderstood.

"I beg your pardon," said he. "Perhaps I have not explained myself clearly. This Müntz money —"

"Müntz money is Swiss money," interrupted Saxon. "That is to say, the new uniform coinage voted by the Diet in 1850."

"Well, what is this Swiss franc worth?"

"A hundred rappen."

"Then a rapp is equivalent to a French centime?"

Saxon looked puzzled.

"The rappen are issued instead of the old batzen," said he.

Mr. Trefalden smiled.

"We don't quite understand each other yet," he said, taking a Napoleon from the number. "What I want to know is simply how many Swiss francs I ought to receive for this?"

Saxon took the Napoleon between his finger and thumb, and examined it on both sides with some curiosity.

"I don't think it is worth anything at all here," he replied, as he gave it back. "What is it?"

"What is it! Why, a Napoleon! Do you mean to say that you never saw one before?"

"I don't think I ever did."

"But I know they are current here, for I changed one at Chur."

Saxon looked as if he could not comprehend his cousin's evident surprise.

"You may be right," said he. "I cannot tell; but I will ask my father when I go home. I daresay he can explain it to you."

Mr. Trefalden's amazement was so great that he took no pains to conceal it.

"But, my dear fellow," he said, "you cannot be unacquainted with the standard value of money — with the relative value of gold and silver?"

"I assure you I know nothing at all about it."

"But — but it is incomprehensible."

"Why so? It is a subject which has never come under my observation, and in which I take no interest."

"Yet in the ordinary transactions of life — of farming life, for instance, such as your own — in the common buying and selling of every day ——"

"I have nothing to do with that. My father manages all matters connected with the land."

"Well, then, if it were only as a guide to the expenditure of your own money, some such knowledge is necessary and valuable."

"But I have no money," replied Saxon, with the simplicity of a savage.

"No money? None whatever?"

"None."

"Do you never have any?"

"Never."

"Have you never had any?"

"Never in my life."

Mr. Trefalden drew a long breath, and said no more.

"That seems to surprise you very much," said Saxon, laughingly.

"Well — it does."

"But it need not. What do I want with money? Of what use would it be to me? What should I do with it? What *is* money? Nothing. Nothing but a sign, the interpretation of which is food, clothing, firing, and other comforts and necessaries of life. I have all these, and, having them, need no money. It is sufficiently plain."

"Ah, yes, it is plain — quite plain," rejoined the lawyer, abstractedly. "I see it all now. You are perfectly right, Saxon. You would not know what to do with it, if you had it. Good night."

"Good night."

"Don't forget half-past eight to-morrow."

"No, no. Good night."

And so they shook hands and parted.

Mr. Trefalden was somewhat late that evening for his dinner; but the cook at the Adler was an expert artist, and not to be disconcerted by so commonplace an emergency. It was a very *recherche* little dinner, and Mr. Trefalden was unusually well disposed to enjoy it. Never, surely, was trout more fresh; never was Mayonnaise better flavoured; never had Lafitte a more delicate aroma. Mr. Trefalden dined deliberately,

praised the cook with the grace of a connoisseur, and lingered luxuriously over his dessert. His meditations were pleasant, and the claret was excellent.

"A simple old pastor with a mania for archæology," muttered he, as he sipped his curaçoa and watched the smoke of his cigar: "a simple old pastor with a mania for archæology, and a young barbarian, who reads Theocritus and never saw a Napoleon! What a delicious combination of circumstances! What a glorious field for enterprise! Verily, the days of El Dorado have come back again!"

CHAPTER VII.

Pastor Martin's Theory.

THE pastor had spoken from his heart of hearts when he told Mr. Trefalden with what solicitude he had educated his brother's orphan; but he did not tell him all, or even half, of the zeal, humility, and devotion with which he had fulfilled that heavy duty. Knowing the full extent of his responsibility, he had accepted it from the very hour of the boy's birth. He had lain awake, night after night, while little Saxon was yet in his cradle, pondering and praying, and asking himself how he should fortify this young soul against the temptations of the world. He had written out full a dozen elaborate schemes of education for him, before the child could babble an articulate word. He spent his leisure in studying the lives of great and virtuous men, that he might thence gather something of their tutelage; and, to this end, toiled patiently once again through all Plutarch's crabbed Greek, and

Fuller's still more crabbed English. He compiled formidable lists of all kinds of instructive books for his pupil's future reading, long before his young ears had ever heard of the penances ending in "ology." He filled reams of sermon paper with unobjectionable extracts from the classic poets, and made easy abstracts of Euclid and Aristotle for his sole use and benefit. In short, he laid himself down before the wheels of this baby Juggernaut in a spirit of the uttermost self-devotion and love, giving up to him every moment upon which his pastoral duties held no claim, and sacrificing even the Etruscans for his dear sake.

The boy's education may almost be said to have dated from the day on which he first began to laugh, and put out his little arms at the sight of those he loved. Uncle Martin, in spite of some maternal opposition, took care of that. He asserted his position at once; and quietly, but firmly maintained. He it was who taught the child his first utterances — who guided his first feeble steps upon the soft sward out of doors — who trained his tongue to stammer its first prayer. He taught him that God had made the sun, and the stars, and the green trees. He led him to see use and beauty in all created things — even in the most unlovely. He brought him up to fear the darkness no more than the light; to admire all that was beautiful; to reverence all that was noble; to love everything that had life. He would not even let him have a toy that was not in some way suggestive of gracefulness or service.

When little Saxon was but two years old, his mother died; and the good pastor pursued his labour henceforth without even a semblance of opposition.

Saxon the elder believed in his brother as of old, and deferred to him in everything; Martin did not, perhaps, believe quite so implicitly in himself; but, as he told his cousin, he prayed for light, and only strove to know his duty, that he might perform it.

As time went on, that duty became daily of more extensive operation. The boy grew portentously both in ideas and inches. He developed an alarming appetite for books, as well as bread and butter. His curiosity became insatiable, and his industry indefatigable. In short, he perplexed his tutor sorely, and unconsciously raised up a host of difficulties which had been left quite unprovided for in the good pastor's theories.

For Martin Trefalden had theories — very strange, unworldly, eccentric theories, indeed — which looked wonderfully well upon paper, and had been proved by him to his brother over and over again, as they sat smoking together by their fireside o' nights; but which had various disagreeable ways of tripping him up, and leaving him in the lurch, now that they came to be put into practice.

Chief and foremost among these was his grand theory about the Trefalden legacy.

Having persuaded his brother to marry, and having, as it were, compelled Saxon the younger to enter on this stage of mortal life, it obviously behoved him above all other things to arm that little Christian against the peculiar dangers and temptations to which his singular destiny exposed him. He must be trained in habits of innocence, frugality, charity, and self-denial. He must be taught to prize only the simplest pleasures. He must be doubly and trebly fortified against pride, avarice, prodigality, self-indulgence, and

every other sin of which wealth is fruitful. Above all, argued the pastor, he must not love money. Nay more, he must be wholly indifferent to it. He must regard it as a mere sign — an expedient — a medium of exchange — a thing valueless in itself, and desirable only because it is convenient. His childish hand must never be sullied by it. His innocent thoughts must never entertain it. He shall be as pure from the taint of gold as the first dwellers in Paradise.

"But when he grows up, brother Martin," suggested the father one evening, while they sat talking it over, as usual, in the chimney corner: "when he grows up, you know, and the money really falls due — what then?"

"What do you mean, Sax?"

"He won't know what to do with it."

"But *you* will," replied the pastor, sharply; "and, after all, 'tis you are the heir — not he. You never seem to remember that, brother Sax."

The farmer made no reply.

"And by that time, too," continued Martin, "the boy will be old enough to understand the right uses of wealth."

"You'll teach him those, brother Martin," said the farmer.

"You and I together."

Saxon the elder smoked on in silence for a moment or two; then, laying his hand gently on the pastor's sleeve, "Brother Martin," he said, "thou'rt younger than I, as I have reminded thee once or twice before. I don't believe that I have a very long life before me. I don't feel as if I should ever inherit that fortune, or see my boy with a beard upon his chin."

He was right. He died, as we know, twelve years before the century expired, and Martin Trefalden continued to bring up his nephew in his own way. He could ride his hobby now at any pace he pleased, without even the interruption of a meek question by the way; so he ambled on year after year with his eyes shut, and refused to recognise the fact that Saxon was no longer a boy. He made himself wilfully blind both to his moustache and his inches. He would not believe that the time was already come for discussing the forbidden subject. He could not endure to tell his young Spartan that he must one day be rich; and so, as it were, be the first to raise his hand against that fabric of unworldliness which it had been the labour of his life to erect.

Of late, however, he had "had misgivings." He had begun to wonder whether perfect ignorance of life was really the best preparation for a career of usefulness, and whether the college at Geneva might not have proved a better school for his nephew than the solitude of Domleschg.

Thus matters stood when William Trefalden Esquire, of Chancery-lane, London, made his appearance at the Château Rotzberg; and thus it happened that his cousin Saxon, the heir to four millions and a-half of funded property, had no notion of the value of a Napoleon.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Trefalden meets Acquaintances by the Way.

PUNCTUAL as the minute hand of the quaint little Swiss timepiece on the mantel-shelf, was Saxon to his appointment. The first metallic chime of the half-hour was just striking as he reached the inn door, and the rapid smiting of his iron heel on the paved corridor leading to the salon drowned the vibrations of the second. He found the breakfast table laid beside an open window looking upon the garden and the mountains, and his cousin turning over the leaves of a large book at the farther end of the room.

"It is pleasant to find one's self so good a judge of character," said Mr. Trefalden, advancing with outstretched hand. "I felt sure you would be true to time, Saxon — *so* sure, that I had sent the eggs away to be poached — and here they are! Come, sit down. I hope you're hungry."

"Indeed I am," replied Saxon, making a vigorous onslaught upon the loaf.

"You seem to have brought the mountain air in with you," said Mr. Trefalden, with a half-envious glance at his fresh young cheek and breezy curls. "It is a glorious morning for walking."

"That it is; and I have been up to some of the high pastures in search of one of our goats. It was so clear at six o'clock that I saw the Glärnisch quite plainly."

"What is the Glärnisch — a mountain?"

"Yes — a splendid mountain; the highest in the Canton Glarus."

"What wine do you prefer, Saxon?"

"Oh, either, thank you. I like the one as well as the other."

Mr. Trefalden raised his eyes from the carte des vins.

"What 'one' and what 'other' do you mean?" asked he.

"The red and the white."

"You mean vin ordinaire?"

"Certainly. Why not?"

Mr. Trefalden shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't drink vinegar myself," said he, "and I should not choose to place it before you. We will try a bottle of our host's Château Margaux. I suppose you like that?"

"I don't know," replied Saxon. "I never tasted it."

"Have you ever tasted champagne?"

"Never."

"Would you like to do so?"

"Indeed I don't care. I like one thing just as well as another. These cutlets are capital."

Mr. Trefalden looked at his cousin with an expression of mingled wonder and compassion.

"My dear boy," said he, "what have you done, that you should *only* like one thing as well as another?"

Saxon looked puzzled.

"It is a shocking defect, either of constitution or education," continued Mr. Trefalden, gravely. "You must try to get over it. Don't laugh. I am perfectly serious. Here, taste this pâté, and tell me if you like it *only* as well as the cutlets."

Saxon tasted it, and made a wry face.

"What is it made of?" said he. "What are those nasty black things in it?"

"It is a pâté de foie gras," replied Mr. Trefalden, pathetically, "and those nasty black things are truffles — the greatest delicacies imaginable."

Saxon laughed heartily, poured some claret into a tumbler, and put out his hand for the water-bottle.

"You are not going to mix that Château Margaux!" cried Mr. Trefalden.

"Why not?"

"Because it is sacrilege to spoil the flavour."

"But I am thirsty."

"So much the better. Your palate is all the more susceptible. Try the first glass pure, at all events."

Saxon submitted, and emptied his glass at a draught.

"That *is* delicious," said he.

"You really think so?"

"Unquestionably."

"You prefer it to the vin ordinaire?"

"I do, indeed."

Mr. Trefalden drew a deep breath of satisfaction.

"*Allons!*" said he. "Then there is some little hope for you, Saxon, after all."

"But —"

"But what?"

Saxon blushed and hesitated.

"But I am not sure," said he, "that I prefer it to the vin d'Asti."

Mr. Trefalden leaned back in his chair and groaned aloud.

"I'm sure I'm very sorry," laughed Saxon, with a

comic look, half shy, half penitent. "But — but it isn't my fault, is it?"

Before Mr. Trefalden could reply to this appeal, there was a rustling of silk, and a sound of voices in the corridor, and a lady and gentleman entered the salon, conversing earnestly. Seeing others in the room, they checked themselves. In the same instant Mr. Trefalden, who sat partly turned towards the door, rose and exclaimed:

"Mademoiselle Colonna!"

The lady put out her hand.

"You here, Mr. Trefalden?" said she. "*Padre mio*, you remember Mr. Trefalden?"

The gentleman, who held his hat in one hand and a bundle of letters and papers in the other, bowed somewhat distantly, and said he believed he had had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Trefalden before.

"Yes, at Castletowers," replied the lawyer.

The gentleman's dark face lighted up instantly, and, laying his hat aside, he also advanced to shake hands.

"Forgive me," he said, "I did not remember that you were a friend of Lord Castletowers. Have you seen him lately? I hope you are well. This is a charming spot. Have you been here long? We have only this moment arrived."

He asked questions without waiting for replies, and spoke hurriedly and abstractedly, as if his thoughts were busy elsewhere all the time. Both his accent and his daughter's were slightly foreign, but his was more foreign than her's.

"I only came yesterday," replied Mr. Trefalden, "and I propose to stay here for a week or two. May

one venture to hope that you are about to do the same?"

The young lady shook her head. Her father had already moved away to the opposite side of the room, and was examining his letters.

"We are only waiting to breakfast while our vetturino feeds his horses," said she; "and we hope to reach Chur in time for the midday train."

"A short sojourn," said Mr. Trefalden.

"Yes; I am sorry for it. We have travelled by this road very often, and always in haste. The place, I am sure, would repay investigation. It is very beautiful."

"You come from Italy, I suppose?"

"Yes, from Milan."

"And are, of course, as devoted as ever to the good cause?"

Her eyes seemed to flash and dilate as she lifted them suddenly upon her interrogator.

"You know, Mr. Trefalden," said she, "that we live for no other. But why do *you* call it the 'good' cause? You have never joined us — you have never helped us. I had no idea that you deemed it a good cause."

"Then you did me injustice," replied the lawyer, with an unembarrassed smile. "The liberty and unity of a great people must be a good cause. I should blush for my opinions if I did not think so."

"Then why not give us the support of your name?"

"Because, my dear madam, it would bring no support with it. I am an obscure man. I have neither wealth nor influence."

"Even if that were so, it would be of little importance," said Mademoiselle Colonna, eagerly. "Every volunteer is precious — even the humblest and weakest. But you are neither, Mr. Trefalden. You are far from being an obscure man. You are a very brilliant man — nay, I mean no compliment. I only repeat what I have often heard. I know that you have talent, and I am sure you are not without influence. You would be a most welcome accession to our staff."

"Indeed, Mademoiselle Colonna, you over-estimate me in every way."

"I do not think so."

"I ought also to tell you that I am a very busy man. My whole life is absorbed by my professional duties."

"It is always possible to find time for good deeds," replied the lady.

"I fear, not always."

"*Enfin*, we are not exacting. To those friends who can give us but their names and their sympathies, we are grateful. You will be one of those, I am sure."

"It is better to give nothing, than to give that which is worthless," said Mr. Trefalden.

Mademoiselle Colonna met this reply with a slight curl of the lip, and another flash of her magnificent eyes.

"Those who are not for Italy, are against her, Mr. Trefalden," she said, coldly, and turned away.

The lawyer recovered his position with perfect tact.

"I cannot allow Mademoiselle Colonna to mistake me a second time," he said. "If she does me the honour to value my poor name at more than its worth, I can but place it at her disposal."

"Are you sincere?" she said, quickly.

"Undoubtedly."

"You permit us the use of your name?"

Mr. Trefalden smiled, and bent his head.

"Thanks in the name of the cause."

"But, signora——"

"But what?"

"You will forgive me if I desire to know in what manner you propose to make my name serviceable?"

"I shall enter it on our general committee list."

"Is that all?"

"All — neither more nor less."

Mr. Trefalden's face showed neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. It was perfectly placid and indifferent, like his smile. Mademoiselle Colonna looked at him as if she would read him through; but she could do nothing of the kind.

"If you repent of the permission you have granted," she began, "or object to the publicity of——"

"No, no," interposed the lawyer, with a little deprecatory raising of the hand, "not at all. It gives me much pleasure."

"If, then, on the contrary, you choose at any time to favour us with more active aid," continued she, "you need only write to my father, or Lord Castletowers, or, indeed, any of the honorary secretaries, and your co-operation will meet with grateful and immediate acceptance. Till then, no demand will be made upon your time or patience."

Mr. Trefalden bowed.

"Have you many such drones in your hive, signora?" asked he.

"Hundreds."

"But they only can be incumbrances."

"Quite the contrary. They are of considerable value. Their names give weight to our cause in the eyes of the world; and the printed lists which contain them find their way into every court and cabinet in Europe. For instance, I have here a paper——"

She paused, glanced towards Saxon, and dropping her voice almost to a whisper, said —

"Your guide, I suppose? Does he understand English?"

"Perfectly," replied Mr. Trefalden, answering the second question, and taking no notice of the first. "As well as you, or myself."

"*Dio!* Have I said too much? Is he safe?"

"I would answer for him with my head, if even he had understood the purport of our conversation — which he has not done."

"How can you be sure of that?"

"Because he is a wild mountaineer, and knows no more of politics than you, Signora Colonna, know of the common law of England."

The young lady took a folded paper from her pocket, and placed it in Mr. Trefalden's hand.

"Read that," she said. "It is from Rome. You are aware, of course, that Sardinia——"

Her voice fell again to a whisper. She drew the lawyer away to her father's table, spread the document before him, and proceeded to comment upon its contents. This she did with great earnestness and animation, but in a tone of voice audible only to her listener. Mr. Trefalden was all attention. Signor Colonna, his thin hands twisted in his hair, and his elbows resting on *the table,* remained absorbed in his papers. Saxon,

who had not presumed to lift his eyes from his plate while the lady stood near him, ventured to glance now and then towards the group at the farther end of the room. Having looked once, he looked again, and could not forbear from looking. It was not at all strange that he should do so. On the contrary, it would have been strange if he had done otherwise; for Saxon Trefalden was gifted with a profound, almost a religious, sense of beauty, and he had never in his life seen anything so beautiful as Olimpia Colonna.

CHAPTER IX.

Olimpia Colonna.

Saxon Trefalden did not fall in love at first sight, as Palamon fell in love with Emelie, walking in the garden "full of braunches grene." His heart beat none the faster, his cheek grew none the brighter, or the paler, for that stolen contemplation. Nothing of the kind. He only admired her — admired her, and wondered at her, and delighted to look upon her; just as he would have admired, and wondered at, and looked upon a gorgeous sunrise among his own native Alps, or a splendid meteor in a summer sky. He did not attempt to analyse her features. He could not have described her to save his life. He had no idea whether her wondrous eyes were brown or black; or whether it was to them, or to the perfect mouth beneath, that her smile owed the magic of its sweetness. He had not the faintest suspicion that her hair was of the same hue and texture as the world-famed locks of Lucrezia Borgia; he only saw that it was tossed back

from her brow like a cloud of burnt gold, crisp and wavy, and gathered into a coronet that a queen might have envied. He knew not how scornfully her lip could curl, and her delicate nostrils quiver; but he could not help seeing how there was something haughty in the very undulations of her tall and slender form, and something imperial in the character of her beauty. In short, Saxon was no connoisseur of female loveliness. The women of the Grisons are among the homeliest of their race, and till now he had seen no others. A really graceful, handsome, highly-bred woman was a phenomenon in his eyes, and he looked upon her with much the same kind of delightful awe that one experiences on first beholding the sea, or the southern stars. Indeed, had Mademoiselle Colonna been only a fine portrait by Titian, or a marble divinity by Phidias, he could hardly have admired her with a more dispassionate and simple wonder.

Presently Mr. Trefalden came back to his breakfast, leaving Signor Colonna and his daughter to theirs. He resumed his seat in silence. He looked grave. He pushed his plate aside with the air of one whose thoughts are too busy for hunger. Then he looked at Saxon; but Saxon's eyes were wandering to the farther end of the salon, and he knew nothing of the close and serious scrutiny to which he was being subjected. The young man would, perhaps, have been somewhat startled had he surprised that expression upon his cousin's face; and even more puzzled than startled by the strange, flitting, cynical smile into which it gradually faded.

"Come, Saxon," said Mr. Trefalden, "we must finish *this* bottle of Château Margaux before we go."

Saxon shook his head.

"You have had only one glass," remonstrated his cousin.

"Thank you, I do not wish for more."

"Then you don't really like it, after all?"

"Yes, I do; but I am no longer thirsty. See — I have almost emptied the water-bottle."

Mr. Trefalden shrugged his shoulders.

"We are told," said he, "that primæval man passed through three preliminary stages before he reached the era of civilisation — namely, the stone period, the iron period, and the bronze. You, my dear Saxon, are still in the stone period; and Heaven only knows how long you might have stayed there, if I had not come to your aid! It is my mission to civilise you."

Saxon laughed aloud. It was his way to laugh on the smallest provocation, like a joyous child; which, in Mr. Trefalden's eyes, was another proof of barbarianism.

"Civilise me, as much as you please, cousin William," he said: "but don't ask me to drink without thirst, or eat without hunger."

Mr. Trefalden glanced uneasily towards the other table, where the father and daughter were breakfasting side by side, and conversing softly in Italian. Perhaps he did not wish them to hear Saxon call him "cousin." At all events, he rose abruptly, and said —

"Come — shall we smoke a cigar in the garden before starting?"

But just as they were leaving the room, Mademoiselle Colonna rose and followed them.

"Mr. Trefalden," she said eagerly, "Mr. Trefalden — we found letters awaiting us at this place, one of

which demands an immediate answer. This answer must be conveyed to a certain spot, by a trusty messenger. It may not, for various reasons, be sent through the post. Can you help me? Do you know of any person whom it would be safe to employ?"

"Indeed I do not," replied the lawyer. "I am as great a stranger in Reichenau as yourself. Perhaps, however, the landlord can tell you ——"

"No, no," interrupted she. "It will not be prudent to consult him."

"Then I fear I am powerless."

"It — it is not very far," hesitated the lady. "He would only have to go about a mile beyond Thusis, on the Splügen road."

"If I were not a man of law, Mademoiselle Colonna," said Mr. Trefalden, with his blandest smile, "I would myself volunteer to be your envoy; but——"

"But you have given us your name, Mr. Trefalden, and can do no more. I understand that. I understood it from the first. I am only sorry to have troubled you."

"And I am sorry that you have not troubled me. I regret that I cannot be of more service."

Wherewith Mr. Trefalden bowed to Mademoiselle Colonna, made a sign to his cousin to follow him, and left the room. But Saxon lingered, blushing and irresolute, and turned to the lady instead.

"I can take the letter," he said, shyly.

Mademoiselle Colonna paused, looked straight into his eyes, and said ——

"It is an important letter. Can I trust you?"

"Yes."

"*Can* I rely upon you to [illegible] it into no other

hands than those of the person whom I shall describe to you?"

"Yes."

"If anyone else should try to take it from you, what would you do?"

"If a man tried to take it from me by force," replied Saxon, laughingly, "I should knock him down."

"But if he were stronger than you; or if there were several?"

He stopped to consider.

"I — I think I should take it out, as if I were going to give it up," said he, "and I would swallow it."

"Good."

Mademoiselle Colonna paused again, and again looked at him steadfastly.

"Did you hear all that I said about this letter just now to Mr. Trefalden?" she said.

"Every word of it."

"You know that you must not repeat it?"

"I suppose so."

"And you know that to convey this letter may be—though it is very unlikely — a service of some little danger?"

"I did not know that; but I knew it was a service of responsibility."

"Well, then, are you equally willing to go?"

"Of course. Why not?"

Mademoiselle Colonna smiled, but somewhat doubtfully.

"I do not doubt your courage," she said; "but how am I to know that you will not betray my confidence?"

Saxon coloured up to the roots of his hair, and drew back a step.

"You must not give me the letter," said he, "if you are afraid to trust me. I can only promise to deliver it, and be silent."

Signor Colonna rose suddenly, and joined them. He had his purse in his hand.

"Will you swear this, young man?" he asked. "Will you swear this?"

"No," said Saxon, proudly, "I will not swear it. It is forbidden to take God's name for trifles. I will give you my word of honour, but I will not take an oath."

"Humph! what reward do you expect?"

"Reward? What do you mean?"

"Will twenty francs satisfy you?"

Saxon drew back another step. He looked from Signor Colonna to his daughter, and from the lady's face to the gentleman's.

"Money!" he faltered. "You offer me money?"

"Is it not enough?"

Barbarian as he was, Saxon was quite sufficiently civilised to writhe under the sting of this affront. The tears started to his honest eyes. It was the first humiliation he had known in his life, and he felt it bitterly.

"I did not offer to carry your letter for hire," said he, in a hurried, quivering voice. "I would have gone twice the distance to — to please and serve the lady. Good morning."

And, turning abruptly on his heel, the young man strode out of the room.

"Oh, stay, monsieur, one moment — one moment *only!*" cried Mademoiselle C

But he was already gone.

"What is this? Who is he? What does it all mean?" asked Signor Colonna, impatiently.

"It means that we have committed a grievous error," replied his daughter. "He is a gentleman — a gentleman, and I took him for a common guide! But see, there he goes, through the garden gate — go to him; pray go to him, and apologise in my name and your own."

"But, my child," said the Italian, nervously, "how can you be sure——?"

"I am sure. I see it all now — I ought to have seen it from the first. But look yonder, and convince yourself! Mr. Trefalden has taken his arm — they go down through the trees! Pray go — go at once, or you will be too late!"

Signor Colonna snatched up his hat and went at once; but he was too late for all that. The garden was a very perplexing place. It belonged, not to the hotel, but to the Château Planta close by, and was entered by a large iron gate, some few yards down the road. It was laid out on a little picturesque peninsula just at the junction of the Hinter and Vorder Rhines, and was traversed by all kinds of winding walks, some of which led down to the water side, some up to shady nooks, or hidden summer-houses, or open lawns fragrant with violets, and musical with ever-playing fountains. Up and down, in and out of these paths, Signor Colonna wandered for nearly half-an-hour without meeting a living soul, or hearing any sound but the rushing of the rivers and the echoes of his own steps on the gravel. Saxon and his cousin had disappeared as utterly as if the green sward had opened and swallowed

them, or the grey Rhine had swept them away in its eddying current.

CHAPTER X.

Mentor begins to take Telemachus in Hand.

Pastor Martin never closed his eyes in sleep that night after William Trefalden paid his first visit at the Château Rotzberg. His anxieties had been increasing and multiplying of late, and this event brought them *en masse* to the surface. He scarcely knew whether to feel relieved or embarrassed by the arrival of his London kinsman. Harassed as his mind had been for some time past, he yet dreaded to lay the source of his troubles before an arbiter who might tell him that he had acted unwisely. Yet here was the arbiter, dropped, as it were, from the clouds; and, be his verdict what it might, the story of Saxon's education could not be withheld from him. The good priest shrunk from this confession. It was true that he had done all for the best. It was also true that he would have given his own life to make that boy a good and happy man. And yet — and yet there remained the fatal possibility which had so haunted him during these last few months. His own judgment might all this time have been at fault; and the fair edifice which he had been building up with such love and devotion for the last twenty years or more, might, after all, have its foundations in the sand. This was a terrible thought, and so hard to bear that the pastor made up his mind to go down to Reichenau early in the morning, and talk the whole matter over with William Trefalden, before

he and Saxon should have started for Chur. When the morning came, however, a goat was missing from the flock. This mischance threw all the farm-work out of its daily course, so that the pastor started a good half-hour too late, quite expecting to find them both gone by the time he reached the Adler.

In the meanwhile, Saxon had overtaken his cousin in the garden of the Château Planta.

"Well," said Mr. Trefalden, "I began to think you were never coming. Take a cigar?"

Saxon shook his head.

"I don't smoke, thank you," said he hurriedly. "This way."

Mr. Trefalden noted the flush upon his cheek, and the agitation of his manner, and followed in silence.

The young man plunged down a labyrinth of narrow side walks, till they came to one that sloped to the water-side. At the bottom of this slope, only a wire fence and a slip of gravelly bank lay between them and the river. A covered bridge spanned the stream a few yards higher up, and beyond the bridge lay the meadows and the mountains. Saxon, without deigning to touch the wire with his hand, sprang lightly over. Mr. Trefalden, less lightly, and more leisurely, followed his example. In a few minutes more, they had both passed through the gloom of the covered bridge, and emerged into the sunshine beyond. Saxon at once struck across the road, and took the field path opposite.

"Is this the way to Chur?" asked Mr. Trefalden, somewhat abruptly.

Saxon started, and stopped.

"No, indeed," he replied. "I — I had forgotten. We must turn back."

"Not till I have finished my cigar. See — here is an old pine-trunk, that looks as if it had been felled on purpose. Let us sit and chat quietly for half-an-hour."

"With all my heart," said Saxon. So they sat down side by side, far enough out of sight or hearing of the garden in which Signor Colonna was searching for them on the opposite side of the river.

"By the way, Saxon, what kept you so long, just now?" said Mr. Trefalden. "Were you flirting with the fair Olimpia?"

Saxon's face was scarlet in an instant.

"I — I offered to carry her letter," he replied, confusedly.

"The deuce you did! And she declined?"

"She misunderstood me."

"I am heartily glad of it. I would not have had you mixed up in any of the Colonna intrigues for a trifle. In what way did she misunderstand you?"

Saxon bit his lip, and the colour which had nearly faded from his face came back again.

"She thought I wanted to be paid for going," he said, reluctantly.

"Offered you money, in short?"

"Yes — that is, her father did so."

"And what did you say?"

"I hardly know. I was greatly vexed — more vexed, perhaps, than I ought to have been. I left them, at all events, and here I am."

"Without the letter, I trust?"

"Without the letter."

There was a brief silence. Mr. Trefalden looked down thoughtfully, and a faint smile flitted over his face. Saxon did not see it. His thoughts were busy elsewhere, and his eyes were also bent upon the ground.

"I am sorry you don't join me," said Mr. Trefalden. "Smoking is a social art, and you should acquire it."

"The art is easy enough," said Saxon. "It is the taste for it which is difficult of acquisition."

"Then you have tried it?"

"Yes."

"And it made you giddy?"

"Not at all; but it gave me no pleasure."

"That was because you did not persevere long enough to experience the delicious dreaminess that —"

"I have no desire to feel dreamy," interrupted Saxon. "I should detest any sensation that left my mind less active than usual. I had as soon put on fetters."

Mr. Trefalden laughed that low, pleasant laugh of his, and stretched himself at full length on the grass.

"There are fetters, and fetters," said he. "Fetters of gold, and fetters of flowers, as well as fetters of vulgar iron."

"Heaven forbid that I should ever know any of the three," observed Saxon, gravely.

"You have this very day been in danger of the two last," replied Mr. Trefalden.

"Cousin, you are jesting."

"Cousin, I am doing nothing of the kind."

Saxon's blue eyes opened in amazement.

"What *can* you mean?" said he.

"I will tell you. But you must promise to listen

patiently, for my explanation involves some amount of detail."

Saxon bent his head, and the lawyer, puffing lazily at his cigar from time to time, continued.

"The Colonna family," said he, "is, as of course you know already, one of the oldest and noblest of the princely Roman houses. Giulio Colonna, whom you saw just now at the Adler, is a scion of the stock. He has been an enthusiast all his life. In his youth he married for love; and, for the last twenty or thirty years, has devoted himself, heart and soul, to Italian politics. He has written more pamphlets and ripened more plots than any man in Europe. He is at the bottom of every Italian conspiracy. He is at the head of every secret society that has Italian unity for its object. He is, in short, a born agitator; and his daughter is as fanatical as himself. As you saw them just now, so they are always. He with his head full of plots, and his pockets full of pamphlets — she exercising all her woman's wit and energy to enlist or utilise an ally."

"I understand now what she meant by the 'good cause,'" observed Saxon, thoughtfully.

"Ay, that's the hackneyed phrase."

Saxon looked up.

"But it *is* a good cause," said he. "It is the liberty of her country."

Mr. Trefalden shrugged his shoulders.

"Yes, yes, of course it is," he replied; "but one gets weary of this pamphleteering and plotting. Fighting is one thing, Saxon, and intriguing, another. Besides, I hate a female politician."

"She is very beautiful," said Saxon.

"She is beautiful, and brilliant, and very fascinating; and she knows how to employ her power, too. Those eyes of Olimpia Colonna's have raised more volunteers for Italy than all her father's pamphlets. Confess now, would you have been so ready to carry that letter this morning, if the lady had worn blue spectacles and a front?"

"I cannot tell, but I fear not," replied the young man, laughingly. "But what has this to do with the fetters?"

"Everything. Granted, now, that the fair signora had known you were my cousin —"

"I suppose she took me for your servant," interposed Saxon, somewhat bitterly.

"— and that you had really taken charge of that paper grenade," continued Mr. Trefalden, "can you not guess what the results might have been? Well, I can. She would not have offered you money — not a sou — but she would have smiled upon you, and given you her hand at parting; and you would probably have kissed it as if she had been an empress, and worshipped her as if she were a divinity; and your head, my dear Saxon, would have been as irretrievably turned as the heads of the false prophets in Dante's seventh circle."

"No, that it would not," said Saxon, hastily; with his face all on fire again at the supposition. "And besides, the false prophets were in the eighth circle, cousin — the place, you know, called Malebolge."

"True — the eighth. Thank you. Then you would have placed the grenade in whichever pocket lay nearest to the place where your heart used to be; and you would have gone to the world's end as readily as to Thusis; and have been abjectly happy to wear

Mademoiselle Colonna's fetters of flowers for the rest of your natural life."

"Nay, but indeed —"

"So much for the flowers," interrupted Mr. Trefalden. "Now for the iron. Once embarked in this 'good cause,' there would have been no hope for you in the future. In less than a month, you would have been affiliated to some secret society. Dwelling as you do, on the high road to Italy, you would have been appointed to all kinds of dangerous services; and the result of the whole affair would have been an Austrian dungeon, whence not even Santa Olimpia herself would have power to extricate you."

"A very pleasant picture, and very well painted," said Saxon, with an angry quiver of the lip; "but an error, cousin, from beginning to end. I should have devoted myself neither to the lady nor the cause; so your argument falls to the ground, and the fetters along with it."

Mr. Trefalden had too much tact to pursue the conversation further, so he changed the subject.

"Are you fond of music?" he asked.

"Passionately."

"Do you play any instrument?"

"I play a little on our chapel organ, but very badly."

"By ear, I suppose?"

"Not entirely. My father learned music at Geneva, in his youth; and all that he knows he has taught me."

"Which, I suppose," said Mr. Trefalden, "is just enough to make you wish it were more?"

"Precisely."

"Have you a good organ at the chapel?"

"No, a wretched thing. It is very small, very old, and sadly out of repair. Two of the stops are quite useless, and there are but five altogether."

"A wretched thing, indeed! Can't you get a new one?"

"I fear not. Perhaps when Count Planta comes back from Italy he may give us one. My father means to mention it to him, at all events; but then the count is always either in Naples or Paris. He may not come to Reichenau for the next three or four years."

"And in the meanwhile," said Mr. Trefalden, "the organ may die of old age, and become altogether dumb."

"Quite true," replied Saxon with a sigh.

Mr. Trefalden glanced at him sharply, and a silence of some moments ensued.

"Don't you think, Saxon," said he, at length, "that it must be very pleasant to be rich?"

Saxon looked up from his reverie, and smiled.

"To be rich?" he repeated.

"Ay, as Count Planta, for instance."

"Are you serious, cousin?"

"Quite serious."

"Then I think it cannot be pleasant at all."

"Why not!"

"Because wealth is power, and power is a frightful temptation."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Trefalden.

"And a frightful responsibility, too."

"Nonsense again!"

"All history proves it," said Saxon, earnestly. "Look at Athens and Rome — see how luxury undermined the liberty of the one, and how the desire of aggrandisement —"

Mr. Trefalden laid his hand laughingly upon the young man's mouth.

"My dear fellow," said he, "you talk like a class-book, or an Exeter Hall lecturer! Who cares about Rome or Athens now? One would think you were a thousand years old, at the very least."

"But —"

"But your arguments are very true, and classical, and didactic — I grant all that. Nevertheless our daily experience proves money to be a remarkably agreeable thing. You, I think, are rather proud of your poverty."

"I am not poor," replied Saxon. "I have all that I need. An emperor can have no more."

"Humph! Are there no poor in Reichenau?"

"None who are very poor. None so poor as the people of Embs."

"Where is Embs?"

"About half-way on the road to Chur. It is a Roman Catholic parish, and the inhabitants are miserably squalid and idle."

"I remember the place. I passed it on my way here yesterday. It looked like a hotbed of fever."

"And well it might," replied Saxon, sadly. "They had it terribly last autumn."

Mr. Trefalden faced round suddenly, leaning on his elbow, and flung away the end of his cigar.

"And so you think, young man," said he, "that because you have all you need, money would be of no use to you! Pray, did it never occur to you that these fever-stricken wretches wanted food, medicine, and clothing?"

"We — we did what we co[illegible]sin," replied

Saxon, in a troubled voice. "God knows it was very little, but — —"

"But if you had been a rich man, you could have done ten times more. Is that not true?"

"Too true."

"Your religion enjoins you to give alms; but how are you to do this without money?"

"One may do good works without money," said Saxon.

"In a very limited degree. Not one-tenth part as many as if you had plenty of it. Did you never look at that side of the question, Saxon? Did you never wish to be rich for the sake of others?"

"I am not sure, but I do not think I ever did. I was so impressed with the belief that money was the root of all evil — —"

"Pshaw! Things are good or evil according to the use we make of them. A knife is but a knife, whether in the hand of a surgeon or an assassin; yet the result is considerably different. You must divest your mind of these fallacies, Saxon. They are unworthy of you!"

Saxon put his hand to his brow uneasily.

"What you say sounds like the truth," said he; "and yet — and yet it is at variance with the precepts upon which I have relied all my life."

"Very possibly," replied Mr. Trefalden. "Precepts, however, are bad things to depend upon. They are made of india-rubber, and will stretch to cover any proposition. Let us suppose, now, that you were a rich man — —"

"How absurd!" said Saxon, forcing a smile. "What is the use of it?"

"We will see what might have been the use of it. In the first place you would have had good instruction, and have become an accomplished musician. You would have enriched yonder little church with a fine organ, and perhaps have rebuilt the church into the bargain. You would have furnished the poor sufferers of Embs with a staff of doctors and nurses, and have saved, perhaps, some scores of human lives. You would have been able to surround your uncle with comforts in his old age. You could have gratified your desire of visiting Rome, Athens, and Jerusalem. You could have lined the old château from top to bottom with Greek and Latin poets, and have founded a museum of Etruscan antiquities for your uncle's perpetual delight. Finally — —"

He paused. Saxon looked up.

"Well, cousin," said he; "finally what?"

"Finally, rich men do not wear grey blouses and leather gaiters. If you had had a coat like mine on your back this morning, Saxon, Mademoiselle Colonna would not have taken you for a common peasant, and Signor Colonna would not have offered you money."

Saxon sprang to his feet with an impatient gesture.

"Enough of would be, and might be!" exclaimed he. "Of what use are these speculations? I am not rich, and I never shall be rich; so it is idle to think of it."

"At all events," persisted Mr. Trefalden, "you admit the desirableness of wealth?"

"I — I am not sure. I cannot relinquish an old belief so hastily."

"Not even in favour of the truth?"

"I do not yet know that it is the truth. My mind needs further evidence."

"Of what, my son?" said a gentle voice close behind him.

It was the pastor. There was a field path across those very meadows between Rotzberg and Reichenau, and the pine-trunk where the cousins had stayed to rest lay within a dozen yards of its course.

Saxon uttered a joyous exclamation.

"This is fortunate!" cried he. "You come at the right moment, father, to judge our argument."

"We were talking of riches," said Mr. Trefalden, rising, and grasping the old man's outstretched hand. "My young kinsman here preaches the language of an Arcadian, and declaims against the precious metals like a second Timon. I, on the other hand, have been trying to convince him that gold has a very bright side, indeed, and may be made to perform a good many wise offices. What say you?"

The pastor looked distressed.

"The question is a broad one," said he, "and there is much truth on both sides of it. But we cannot discuss it now. I want to talk to you, Cousin William. I have hastened down from Rotzberg, fearing all the time lest I should miss you. Were you not going to Chur?"

"We were going, and are going, by-and-by," replied Mr. Trefalden.

"Can you spare me half-an-hour before you start?"

"The whole day, if you please."

"Nay, an hour will be more than enough. Saxon, that which I have to say to our cousin is not for thy ears. Go up, my son, to Tamins, and inquire about

that Indian corn-seed that farmer Retzschel promised us last week."

Saxon looked surprised; but prepared to be gone without a word.

"Shall I come back here afterwards?" he asked.

"No. It would be better to await thy cousin at the Adler."

Saxon coloured, and hesitated.

"Could I not wait at the chapel?" said he.

"Ay, at the chapel, if thou wilt."

So the young man waved a cheery farewell, and started at once upon his uncle's errand. Looking back presently, at the turn of the path, he saw them sitting on the pine-trunk, side by side, already in earnest conversation. He saw Mr. Trefalden shake his head. He fancied there was some kind of trouble in the old man's attitude. What could his uncle have to say to one whom, kinsman though he was, he had never seen till the previous evening? Why this mystery about their conversation? It was very strange. Saxon could not help feeling that he must be himself concerned, somehow or another, in the matter; and this surmise added, vaguely, to his uneasiness.

CHAPTER XI.

Up at the Church.

THREE hours later, Saxon was sitting alone before the organ in the little chapel on the hill. One hand supported his head, the other rested listlessly upon the keys. A tattered mass of Palestrina's lay open upon the music desk; but Saxon's eyes were turned to-

wards the door, and his thoughts were far away. He had been playing, half an hour or an hour ago, and had fallen since then into a long and anxious train of thought. He had even forgotten the little fair-haired urchin who acted for him as blower, and who had fallen fast asleep in the sunshine that streamed through the south window at the back of the organ.

It was a plain, white-washed, brown-raftered little church, with a row of deal benches on each side of the aisle, and a pulpit to match. On a long board suspended from the roof just above the altar was painted, in gaudy characters of gold and scarlet, a German couplet signifying, "Where God is, there is liberty." The organ was of old dark oak, with ebony keys; and on the top stood a battered angel with a broken trumpet. It was a place of primitive simplicity, and no kind of architectural beauty. The beauty lay all without, among the Alps and pine forests that showed here and there through open doors and windows.

It was more than an hour past midday when Saxon Trefalden sat thus before the organ, and his cousin had not yet come to claim his company. His thoughts were busy, and his soul was disquieted within him. The uneasiness that he had felt on leaving those two to their solitary conference had now increased tenfold. Why was he excluded from it? And why should his uncle, who had never, as he believed, hidden a thought from him before, keep a secret from him now?

Then, what of this unknown kinsman, William Trefalden, of London? Did Saxon really like him? The question was a difficult one. He scarcely knew how to answer it, even to himself. He thought he

liked his cousin. Nay, he felt sure — almost sure — that he liked him. Not, perhaps, quite so well to-day as yesterday. Was it that an indefinite sense of mistrust mingled with the liking? No, that was impossible. His generous nature revolted at the thought. Was it that William Trefalden's opinions were so new to him, and went so far to unsettle his own preconceived notions of good and evil? Or was it that he was himself somewhat out of humour with the world this morning — somewhat less contented than of old? The organ, to be sure, had sounded more wheezy and thin than ever to-day, and his own playing had seemed clumsier than usual. Besides, that matter of the twenty francs was hard to forget. Well, well, he certainly liked his cousin; and as for poverty, why he must put up with it, and make the best of it, as his father and uncle had done before him. Then, with regard to Olimpia Colonna — Pshaw! were she fair as Helen, and patriotic as Camilla, it would make no difference to him. Saxon flattered himself that he was invulnerable.

At this point of his meditations, a shadow fell upon the threshold, and was followed by the substance of William Trefalden.

"I am ashamed, Saxon," said he, "to have kept you waiting for me so long. Your uncle is gone home, and I suppose it is too late to think of Chur to-day. Is this the organ?"

Saxon bent his head affirmatively.

"So! a lumbering old box of pipes, only fit for firewood! What say you? Will you present the parish with a new one?"

"I hope the parish will not have to wait till I do so," replied Saxon, with a faint smile.

"But I am serious. Will you order one from Geneva, or have it brought all the way from Paris?"

"Cousin William, what *do* you mean?" faltered Saxon, his heart beginning to beat faster, he knew not why.

Mr. Trefalden laid his two hands on the young man's shoulders, and, looking him steadily in the face, replied: —

"This is what I mean, Saxon. In three or four weeks' time you will be a rich man — a very rich man — ten times richer than Count Planta, or any nobleman here."

"I — rich — richer than — I do not understand you!" said Saxon, brokenly.

"It is the absolute truth."

"But my uncle —"

"He knows it. He has known it since before you were born. He has desired me to tell you all the story of your inheritance."

Saxon put his hand to his forehead, and turned his face away.

"Not just yet — not here," he said, in an agitated voice. "I — I am so taken by surprise — almost terrified. Will you leave me for a few minutes? I will come out to you presently in the churchyard."

"Oh, certainly," replied Mr. Trefalden, and turned towards the door. Saxon sprang after him, and grasped him by the arm.

"One moment," exclaimed he, pointing to a little stone tablet let into the church wall about half way between the organ and the porch. "Did *he* know, too?"

The tablet bore the name of Saxon Trefalden, and the date of his death.

"Your father and your uncle both knew it," replied Mr. Trefalden, gravely. "This fortune would have been his now, instead of yours, if he had lived to claim it."

Saxon turned away with a deep sob, and his cousin went out into the sunshine.

Left alone in the little silent church, the young man covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears.

"God help me!" murmured he. "What shall I do? I am so young, so ignorant, so unfit to bear this burden. God help me, and guide me to use these riches rightly!"

And then he knelt down beside the little organ, and prayed.

CHAPTER XII.

On the Terrace at Castletowers.

A BROAD gravelled terrace lying due east and west with vases of massive terra-cotta, full of glossy evergreens, placed at regular intervals along the verge of the broad parapet. A mighty old Elizabethan mansion of warm red brick, standing back in a deep angle of shade, with all its topmost gables, carved scutcheons, and gilded vanes glittering to the morning sun. A fore-ground of undulating park traversed by a noisy rivulet, and rich in old gnarled oaks planted at the time of the Restoration. A distance of blue hills and purple common, relieved here and there by stretches of

fir plantation jutting out into the hazy heath-land, like wooded promontories sloping to the sea. On the terrace, a peacock with all his gorgeous plumage displayed; a lady feeding him from her own white hand; and two gentlemen standing by. The time, the second day of April, balmy, sunny, redolent of the violet and the thorn. The county, Surrey. The place, Castletowers.

"How you flatter that bird, Mademoiselle Colonna!" said one of the gentlemen; a tall, soldierly man, with a deep sabre-scar across his left temple, and some few grey hairs silvering his thick moustache and beard. "His disposition was always a perfect balance between vanity and ill-nature, but since your advent, the brute has become more insufferable than ever. Take care! I never see your hand so near his beak without a shudder."

"Fear nothing on my account, Major Vaughan," replied the lady; "and pray do not be unjust to Sardanapalus. He is quite an altered bird; and as gentle as a dove — with me."

"You do well to add that clause, my dear lady; for we can all bear witness to the way in which his majesty 'takes it out' in viciousness when you are not by. He flew at Gulnare not an hour ago, down by the five oaks yonder; and I believe, if I had not chanced to be within hail, and if the mare were not the most self-possessed beast in creation, there would have been battle, murder, and sudden death between them."

"Really? You make me prouder than ever of my conquest."

The soldier shrugged his shoulders.

"Pshaw!" said he, "what is one bar on the medal, more or less, to the hero of a hundred fields?"

"Major Vaughan, you are complimentary."

"Vaughan's pretty speeches always smell of powder," laughed the younger gentleman, who was leaning against the parapet close by.

"Bah! *que veux-tu, mon cher?* A man can no more shake off the associations of twenty years, than he can shake off the bronze from his skin —

> You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,
> The scent of the barrack will hang round it still."

Mademoiselle Colonna looked up quickly, still feeding the peacock from her open palm.

"I like your compliment the better, Major Vaughan, for what Lord Castletowers calls its smell of powder," said she. "It is a familiar perfume to me, remember."

"I don't like to remember it," muttered the soldier, pulling thoughtfully at his moustache.

"Nor I," said Lord Castletowers, in a low voice.

"Why not, pray?" asked the lady, with a heightened colour. "Is it not the incense of Italian liberty?"

"Granted; but it is an incense so powerful that fair ladies do well to smell it from a distance."

"Not when they can be of service in the temple, Major Vaughan," replied Mademoiselle Colonna, with one of her proud smiles. "But, digressions apart, do you really tell me that Sardanapalus attacked Gulnare without any kind of provocation?"

"I do, indeed."

"It is strange that he should be so savage."

"It is still more strange that he should be so do-

cile! I believe, Mademoiselle Colonna, that you are in possession of some taming secret known only to yourself."

"Perhaps I am. May I be allowed to cite you as a specimen of my success?"

Major Vaughan bowed almost to the ground.

"Oh! daughter of the sun and moon," said he, "the head of thy slave is at thy disposal!"

Startled either by the Major's profound salaam, or by the sudden pealing of the breakfast bell, Sardanapalus threw up his head, and uttered an angry scream. Mademoiselle Colonna withdrew her hand quickly, and flung away the remainder of the cake with which she had been feeding him. Lord Castletowers saw the gesture, and sprang to her side.

"The brute has not bitten you?" he said anxiously.

She had already wrapped her handkerchief round her hand, and was moving slowly towards the house, as if nothing had happened; but there was a scarcely perceptible quiver in the smile with which she replied.

"Very slightly, thank you. Don't be angry with the poor bird. He meant no harm."

"Meant!" echoed the young man, fiercely. "I'll teach him to know what he means in future. Will you permit me to see the extent of the mischief?"

"Nay, it is nothing — a mere peck."

Lord Castletowers uttered an exclamation of dismay, as he stooped to take something from the ground. It was a little fragment of cake, all crimson dyed.

"It is no 'peck' that has done this!" he exclaimed. "For pity's sake, Olim — mademoiselle, allow me to see your hand!"

"Indeed it is not serious; but lest you should fancy it worse than it is — there!"

The blush with which she began faded quite away as she concluded, and left her somewhat paler than usual. She averted her eyes. She could bear the pain bravely enough, but not the sight.

"What is the matter?" said Major Vaughan, who had turned away on making his salaam, and who had seen nothing of the accident.

"That carrion bird has bitten Mademoiselle Colonna!" replied Lord Castletowers, with unconcealed agitation. "Bitten her severely. See this!"

The pretty little delicate palm was half laid open, but the slender fingers did not even tremble. Major Vaughan examined the wound with the keen glance of one accustomed to such matters.

"Humph! an ugly gash!" said he; "but not so bad as a bayonet thrust, after all. If you will accompany me indoors, mademoiselle, I will dress it for you in first-rate style. You do not know what a capital surgeon I am. Here, Castletowers, —— something to tie up the young lady's hand, in the meanwhile!"

Lord Castletowers gave his own handkerchief, and, turning aside, hastily thrust Mademoiselle Colonna's into his breast-pocket. Her eyes were still averted; but a dark shadow came upon Major Vaughan's face.

"A thousand thanks," said she, smilingly, when the bandage was adjusted.

"You must not thank me till it is properly dressed, mademoiselle," replied he, offering her his arm. "And now, if you please, we will find our way to the housekeeper's room, and procure all that is necessary; while you, my dear fellow, had better go and explain the

cause of this delay to Lady Castletowers. I know she does not like to wait for breakfast."

"True, it is one of my mother's peculiarities. I will do the work of propitiation. As for Sardanapalus . . . ."

"Sardanapalus must be pardoned," interposed Mademoiselle Colonna.

Lord Castletowers shook his head.

"Nay, I entreat."

But she entreated with the air of an empress.

The young man lifted his hat.

"The prisoner at the bar was condemned to death," said he, courteously; "but since the queen chooses to exercise her prerogative, the court commutes his sentence to solitary confinement for life in the great aviary at the end of the Italian garden."

At this moment the breakfast bell sent forth a second clamorous peal; the imperial convict uttered another dissonant cry, and sailed across the terrace in all his panoply of plumage; and the trio went up to the house.

CHAPTER XIII.

The House of Castletowers.

GERVASE LEOPOLD WYNNCLYFFE, Earl of Castletowers, was the fifth peer of his house, and the last of his name. He was not rich; but he was very good-natured. He had no great expectations: but he was tolerably clever, tolerably good-looking, and only twenty-seven years of age. His principles were sound; his French accent was perfect; he had made one suc-

cessful speech in the House, and he was unmarried. With all these qualifications, and his five feet eleven inches to boot, it is not surprising that Lord Castletowers, despite his very limited means, should have found himself, during several seasons, the object of a fair amount of maternal manœuvring. That he was not yet given over to the spoilers was owing to no wisdom of his own, and to no absence of that susceptibility which flesh (especially flesh under thirty years of age) is heir to. On the contrary, he had been smitten, as the phrase goes, twice or thrice; but on each of these occasions his destiny, and, perhaps, his lady mother, had interposed to save him.

The young Earl adored his mother. She was still beautiful; slender, pale, stately, and somewhat above the average height of women. In complexion and features she resembled the later portraits of Marie Antoinette; but it was a likeness of outline and colouring only. The expression was totally different — so different that it appeared sometimes to obliterate the resemblance altogether. The sorrow, the sweetness, the womanly tenderness of that poor royal face were all missing from the serene countenance of Alethea, Countess of Castletowers. She looked as if she had never known a strong emotion in her life; as if love and hate, anguish and terror, would have glanced off from her like arrows from a marble statue. Proud as they both were, the very pride of these two faces had nothing in common. That of the queen was passionate, upon the lip; that of the countess shone coldly from the eye. Pride was, indeed, the dominant principle of her being — the pivot upon which her every thought, word, and action turned. She had been a great heiress.

She was the daughter, wife, and mother of an Earl. She was of the ancient line of Holme-Pierpoint; and the blood of the Holme-Pierpoints had mingled once with that of the Plantagenets, and twice with that of the Tudors. The Countess of Castletowers never forgot these things for a moment. It is doubtful if they were even absent from her dreams. Her dignity, her grace, her suavity of manner were perfect; but they were all based upon her pride, like that royal bower of which the poet dreamed: —

"A sunny pleasure-dome, with caves of ice."

Lady Castletowers had not loved her husband; but she loved her son as much as it was in her nature to love anything. The husband had squandered her dower; insulted her by open neglect; and died abroad, overwhelmed with debt and discredit, within the fifth year of their marriage. The son had reverenced, admired, idolised her from his cradle. He had never given her cause for one moment's anxiety since the day of his birth. As a little child, he thought her the most noble and gracious of God's creatures: as he grew in years, his faith in her remained undiminished, and his love became that beautiful love which mingles the chivalrous respect of the man with the tender homage of the son. It was not, therefore, surprising that whatever waif of human weakness had fallen to her ladyship's portion should have been garnered up for this one object. While he was yet very young, her affection for him was, as it were, invested at compound interest, and left to accumulate till he should become of an age to deserve it; but as he arrived at manhood, his life became identified with her own. All her pride and ambition centred in

him. He must marry well — that is to say, richly and nobly. He must make a position in the Upper House. He must some day be a cabinet minister; and he must get that step in the peerage which the Duke of York had once solicited for his father, but which George the Fourth had refused to grant. Lady Castletowers had set her heart on obtaining these things for her son, but above all else had she set her heart upon the last. She would have sold ten years of her own life to see the marquis's coronet upon his carriage panels. When the clergyman in church put up that prayer, towards the end of the morning service, which implores fulfilment for the desires and petitions of the congregation, "as may be most expedient for them," Lady Castletowers invariably reverted in the silence of her thoughts to the four pearls and the four strawberry leaves; and never asked herself if there could be profanity in the prayer.

In the meanwhile, the young Earl accepted all this pride and ambition for the purest maternal affection. He did not care in the least about the marquisate; he was somewhat indifferent to the attractions of the Upper House; and he had almost made up his mind that he would not, if he could, be burdened with the toils and responsibilities of office. But he would not have grieved his mother by a hint of these heresies, for the universe. He even blamed himself for his own want of ambition, and soothed his troubled conscience every now and then by promising himself that he would very soon "read up" one of the popular financial topics, and make another speech in the House.

But that question of the wealthy marriage was to *him* the least agreeable of all his mother's projects.

There was some romance in the young man's disposition, and he could not relish the thought of adding to his own scanty acres by means of his wife's dower. He would have preferred to marry a village maiden for love, like the Lord of Burleigh; or, at least, to have felt that he was free to love like the Lord of Burleigh, if he chose.

It was in somewhat of this same spirit of romance that Lord Castletowers had associated himself with the Italian cause. He had, or fancied that he had, a democratic bias. He was fond of quoting the examples of the classic republics; he had read Rousseau's "Contrat Social," and Godwin's "Political Justice;" and he had a genuine English hatred of oppression, whatever its form or aspect. Surrounded as he had been since the hour of his birth by a triple rampart of conservatism, it is possible that democracy possessed for this young nobleman somewhat of the stimulative charm of a forbidden luxury. He certainly never confided the full extent of his republican sympathies to his lady mother, and he would have been far from grateful to any officious friend who had presented her with a verbatim report of certain of his most enthusiastic speeches. Those speeches were delivered at meetings held in obscure lecture-halls and institutes in unaristocratic parts of London, and were remarkably good speeches of their kind — vigorously thought, and often felicitously expressed; but their eloquence, nevertheless, was by no means calculated to gratify the Countess of Castletowers.

On all questions of English polity, Lord Castletowers was what is somewhat vaguely called a "liberal conservative;" on all Italian subjects, a

bonnet rouge. He would no more have advocated universal suffrage in his own country than he would have countenanced slavery in Venetia; but he firmly believed in the possible regeneration of the great Roman republic, and avowed that belief with unhesitating enthusiasm. Besides, his old college tastes and associations were yet fresh upon him, and he entertained all a young man's admiration for the Latin heroes, poets, and historians. Nor were his sympathies all so classical and remote. He was keenly susceptible to those influences which beset the travelled amateur of books and art. He had loitered, sketched, and dreamed away more than one winter among the palaces of Florence and Rome. He had read Petrarch, and Tasso, and the most amusing parts of Dante. He had been in love, though never, perhaps, very deeply, with scores of dark-eyed Giuliettas and Biancas. He had written canzonets in which *amore* rhymed to *core* in the orthodox fashion, and had sung them by moonlight under picturesque balconies, over and over again, in many a stately old Italian city. Above all, he had known Giulio Colonna from his earliest boyhood, and had been, as it were, inoculated with Italian patriotism ere he knew what patriotism meant. Accustomed to regard Signor Colonna not only as some kind of distant cousin, but also as one of his mother's most frequent guests, he had accepted all his opinions with the unquestioning faith of childhood. He had, indeed, listened to the magic of his eloquence long before he was of an age to understand its force and purport, and had become insensibly educated in the love and reverence of those things which were to Giulio Colonna as the life *of his life.* It was, therefore, no wonder that the

young Earl proved, as he grew to man's estate, a staunch friend to the Italian cause. It was no wonder that he made enthusiastic speeches at obscure meetings, transacted a vast amount of really hard work in his capacity of Honorary Secretary to the Central Committee, and believed in Giulio Colonna and the great Italian republic of the future, with all his heart and soul.

There was, in reality, no blood relationship whatever between the Castletowers family and this branch of the Colonnas. A Miss Holme-Pierrepoint had married a Prince Colonna some sixty-five or seventy years before; but of this marriage no children had been born. A pleasant intercourse had subsisted, however, between the two families ever since. The Colonnas, down to the third and fourth generation, were royally welcomed at the grand old Surrey mansion, whenever any of them came to England. Lady Castletowers and her son had once spent six delightful weeks of villegiatura at Prince Colonna's Alban Villa; and when the young Earl was in Rome, he had been the very life and soul of all the winter entertainments given at that stately palazzo which stands in the Corso at the corner of that Piazza di Santissimi Apostoli. As for Giulio Colonna, he had been l'intime du maison ever since the Honourable Alethea Pierrepoint had exchanged her name for that of Castletowers just as he had been l'intime du maison at the house of her ladyship's father. He was one of the very few whom the countess really valued, and whom she condescended to call by the sacred name of friend. Perhaps he was the only person upon earth who could be said to enjoy her ladyship's confidence. It was to him that she had

turned for help in her matrimonial troubles; for advice respecting the education of her son; for sympathy when any of her ambitious projects failed of success. She had known him, indeed, from her girlhood. She admired his great and varied talents; she had perfect reliance on his probity and honour; and she respected his nobility of birth. To a certain extent she respected his patriotic devotion as well; though, it is almost needless to add, she was wholly at issue with him on the subject of republicanism.

"It is a point," she used to observe, "upon which my good friend, Signor Colonna, is deaf, I grieve to say, alike to reason and good taste. He has so imbued himself with the classical history of his country, that he can no longer discriminate between the necessities of a semibarbarous race and those of a highly civilised people. He cannot see that the monarchical form of government is precisely that which the age demands. I am very sorry for him. I have represented the matter to him, over and over again, from every conceivable point of view; but with unvarying ill success. I am weary of trying to convince a man who shuts his ears to conviction."

And when she had said this, or words to this effect, Lady Castletowers would sigh, and drop the subject with the air of one who had exhausted it utterly.

CHAPTER XIV.

Mother and Son.

"LATE, and alone, Gervase?" said Lady Castletowers, with cold displeasure. "The breakfast bell rang ten minutes ago. Where are our guests?"

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting, mother," replied the Earl, "and you will be sorry for the cause. Sardanapalus had bitten Miss Colonna in the hand, and Vaughan has gone round with her to Mrs. Walker's room to get it dressed. I always said that confounded bird would do mischief some day. Where's Colonna?"

"In his room, I suppose, and deaf, as usual, to the bell. Is Olimpia much hurt?"

"Painfully; but, of course, not dangerously."

"There is no necessity for my presence?"

"No absolute necessity," rejoined the young Earl, with some hesitation, and a little emphasis.

The Countess seated herself at the breakfast table, and dismissed the servant in attendance.

"I am glad," said she, "of a few moments alone with you, Gervase. How long does Major Vaughan propose to remain with us?"

"I really do not know. He has said nothing about it, and I fancy his time just now is at his own disposal."

"I think we ought to do something to make Castletowers pleasant to him while he is here."

"I was intending to make the same remark to you, my dear mother," replied the young man. "I have, indeed, asked some men from town, and I rather think

Charley Burgoyne and Edward Brandon may be down next week; but, that is not enough. Shall we give a ball?"

"Or a fête — but perhaps the summer is hardly sufficiently advanced for a fête at present."

"And then a fête is so confoundedly expensive!" groaned the Earl. "It won't be so bad after the half-yearly rents have come in; but I assure you, mother, I was shocked when I looked into my banker's book yesterday. We have barely a couple of hundreds to carry us through up to Midsummer!"

The Countess sighed, and tapped impatiently on the edge of the table with her delicate, jewelled fingers.

"It's a miserable thing to be poor!" ejaculated the Earl.

"My poor boy, it is indeed!"

"If it hadn't been for selling those two farms . . ."

"In order to pay off the mortgage which your father's extravagance entailed upon us!" interrupted Lady Castletowers, bitterly.

"If it hadn't been for paying that off," he continued, "our means would now have been so comfortable! That twenty-five thousand pounds, mother, would have made us rich."

"Comparatively rich," replied the Countess.

"Well, it's of no use to be always moaning, like the harbour bar in Kingsley's poem," said the young man, with an air of forced gaiety. "We *are* poor, dearest mother, and we must make the best of it. In the meanwhile, let us, by all means, give some kind of entertainment. You can think the matter over, and *whatever* you decide upon is sure to be best and wisest.

I must find the money, somehow. Perhaps Trefalden could advance me a hundred or two."

"Has he not lately come into an enormous fortune?" asked the Countess, abstractedly.

"No, not our Trefalden, but some member, I believe, of his family. I don't know the story, but I have heard it is something very romantic. However, Trefalden himself is a rich man — he's too quiet and clever not to be rich. At all events, I can but ask him."

"I don't like you to borrow money, Gervase," said Lady Castletowers.

"I abhor it in the ordinary sense of the word," replied her son. "But a gentleman may draw upon his lawyer for a small sum without scruple. It is not at all the same thing."

"If I could but see you well married!" sighed the Countess.

Lord Castletowers shrugged his shoulders.

"And occupying that position in the country to which your birth and talents entitle you! I was talking about you the other day to the Duke of Dorchester. He seems to think there must be a change in the ministry before long; and then, if he, and one or two others of our acquaintance, get into office — *nous verrons!*"

"There are always so many ifs," said Lord Castletowers, with a smile.

"By the way, Miss Hatherton — the rich Miss Hatherton — is staying at Aylsham Park. Of course, if we give a fête, the Walkingshaws will bring her with them. It is said, Gervase, that she has two hundred and fifty thousand pounds."

"Indeed!" said Lord Castletowers, indifferently.

"And she is handsome."

"Yes — she is handsome."

The Countess looked at her son. The Earl looked out of the window.

"I fancy," said the Countess, "that Major Vaughan is paying a good deal of attention to Olimpia."

"To — to Miss Colonna!" said the Earl, with an involuntary catching of his breath. "Impossible!"

"Why impossible?"

"Because —— Well, perhaps I scarcely know why; but it seems so unlikely."

"Why unlikely?" pursued the Countess, coldly and steadily.

"Well — Vaughan is not a marrying man — and he has no private means, or next to none, besides his pay — and — and then, they are so utterly unsuited — unsuited in every way — in tastes, ages, dispositions, everything!"

The young man spoke hastily, and with a perceptibly heightened colour. His mother, still coldly observing him, went on.

"I do not agree with you, Gervase," said she, "in any one of your objections. I believe that Major Vaughan would quite willingly marry, if Olimpia were the lady. He is not more than forty; and if he has only a few hundreds a year besides his pay, he is, at all events, richer than Olimpia's father. Besides, he is a gallant officer; and if all that Colonna anticipates prove really true, a gallant officer would be worth more than a mere fortune, just now, to the Italian cause."

The Earl still stood by the window, looking out

at the park and the blue hills far away; but made no reply.

"He has said nothing to you upon the subject?" said Lady Castletowers.

"Nothing."

"Perhaps, however, it is hardly likely that he would do so."

"Most unlikely, I should say. But here's the letter-bag — and here come surgeon and patient."

Lady Castletowers became at once condolent and sympathetic; Mademoiselle Colonna laughed off the accident with impatient indifference; Major Vaughan bowed over his hostess's fair hand; and all took their places at table.

"A budget, as usual, for Colonna," said Lord Castletowers, sorting the pile of letters just tumbled out of the bag. "One, two, three billets, redolent of what might be called the parfum du boudoir, for Vaughan — also, as usual! Two letters, my dearest mother, for you; and only one (a square-shouldered, round-fisted, blue-complexioned, obstinate looking business document) for myself. A pretty thing to lie at the bottom of one's letter bag, like hope at the bottom of Pandora's casket!"

"It hath a Bond-street aspect, Castletowers, that affects me unpleasantly," said Major Vaughan, from whose brow the angry flush with which he had received his three letters and swept them carelessly on one side, had not yet quite faded.

"Say rather a Chancery-lane aspect," replied the young Earl, breaking the seal as he spoke; "and that's as much worse than Bond-street as Newgate is worse than the Queen's Bench."

"Bond-street and Chancery-lane, Newgate and the Queen's Bench!" repeated Mademoiselle Colonna. "The conversation sounds very awful. What does it all mean?"

"I presume," said Lady Castletowers, "that Major Vaughan supposed the letter to be written by a — a tailor, or some person of that description; while it really comes from my son's lawyer, Mr. Trefalden."

"I met Mr. Trefalden a few weeks ago," said Mademoiselle Colonna, "in Switzerland."

"In Switzerland?" echoed Lord Castletowers.

"And he authorised me to add his name to our general committee list."

"A miracle! a miracle!"

"And why a miracle?" asked Lady Castletowers. "Does Mr. Trefalden disapprove the Italian cause?"

"Mr. Trefalden, my dear mother, never approves or disapproves of any public movement whatever. Nature seems to have created him without opinions."

"Then he is either a very superficial or a very ambitious man," said Lady Castletowers.

"The latter, depend on it. He's a remarkably clever fellow, and has good interest, no doubt. He will set his politics to the tune of his interest some day, and make his way to the woolsack 'in a galliard.'"

"I am glad this is but a conjectural estimate of Mr. Trefalden's character," said Olimpia.

"You like him, then?" said Major Vaughan, hastily.

"I neither like him nor dislike him; but if these were proven facts, I could never speak to him again."

Signor Colonna came in and made his morning salutations, his eyes wandering eagerly towards his letters all the time.

"Good morning — good morning. Late, did you say? *Peccavi!* So I am. I lost myself in the library. Bell! I heard no bell. Pray forgive me, dear Lady Castletowers. Any news to-day? You were early this morning, Major Vaughan. Saw you in the saddle soon after six. Plenty of letters this morning, I see — plenty of letters!"

And with this he slipped into his seat, and became at once immersed in the contents of the documents before him.

"Trefalden writes from town, mother," said Lord Castletowers. "He excuses his delay on the plea of much business. He has been settling his cousin's affairs — the said cousin having come in for between four and five millions sterling."

"A man who comes in for four or five millions sterling has no right to live," said Major Vaughan. "His very being is an insult to his offended species."

"But if this cousin should prove to be a lady?" suggested Mademoiselle Colonna.

"I would condemn her, of course — to matrimony."

"I should think Trefalden would take care of that!" laughed the Earl.

"But *is* the cousin a lady?" asked Lady Castletowers, with seeming indifference.

"Alas! no, my dear mother, too surely he belongeth to the genus homo. Trefalden's words are — 'I have been assisting my cousin in the arrangement of his affairs, he having lately inherited a fortune of between four and five millions sterling.'"

"I have no doubt that he is fat, ugly, and disagreeable," said Major Vaughan.

"And plebeian," added Lady Castletowers, with a smile.

"And illiberal," said Olimpia.

"And, in short, so rich," said the Earl, "that were he hideous and ignorant as Caliban, society would receive him with open arms, and the beauty of the season would gladly wear orange-blossoms for him at St. George's! What says this honourable company — shall I invite him down to Castletowers for a week or two, and shall we all fall to worshipping the golden calf?"

"Not for the world!" exclaimed Olimpia, scornfully; but she was the only one who replied.

The breakfast party then broke up. The Earl went to his stables, Olimpia to her apartments, and Major Vaughan to the billiard-room. Signor Colonna and Lady Castletowers strolled to and fro in the sunshine, outside the breakfast-room windows.

"But who is this millionaire?" asked the Italian, eagerly.

"*Caro amico*, you know as much as I know," replied Lady Castletowers. "He is a cousin of our solicitor, Mr. Trefalden, who is a very wellbred gentlemanly person. As for this fortune, I think I have heard that it has been accumulating for one or two centuries — but that is probably a mere rumour."

"Between four and five millions!" ejaculated Colonna. "With such a fortune, what might not be done by a friend to the cause!"

Lady Castletowers smiled.

"*Sempre Italia!*" she said.

"*Sempre Italia!*" replied he, lifting his hat reverently as he pronounced the words. "While I live, Lady Castletowers. While I live."

They had come now to the end of the path, and were about to return, when he laid his hand on hers, and said, very earnestly —

"I wish I could see this man. I wish I knew him. I have won over thousands of recruits in my time, Alethea — thousands, who had only their blood to give, and gave it. Money is as precious as blood in a cause like ours. If we had had but *one* million, eighteen months ago, Italy would now have been free."

"Ah, you want me to help you — you want Gervase to bring him here? Is that so?"

"Precisely."

"Well, I suppose it can be done — somehow."

"I think it can," replied Colonna. "I am sure it can."

"And it might lead to great results, eh?"

"It might, indeed it might."

"Your personal influence, I know, is almost magical," mused Lady Castletowers; "and if our millionaire should prove to be young and impressionable. . . ."

She hesitated. He looked up, and their eyes met.

"Olimpia is very lovely," she said, smiling; "and very fascinating."

"I have thought of that," he replied. "I have thought of that; and Olimpia would never marry any man who did not devote himself to Italy, body and soul!"

"And purse," added Lady Castletowers, quietly.

"And purse — of course," said he, with a somewhat heightened colour.

"Then I will do what I can, dear old friend, for your sake," said Lady Castletowers, affectionately.

"And I," he replied, "will do what I can for the sake of the cause. God knows, Alethea, that I do it for the cause alone — God knows how pure my soul is of any other aim or end!"

"I am sure of it," she replied, abstractedly.

"Had I but the half of four or five millions at command, the stake upon which I have set my whole life, and my child's life, would be won. Do you hear me, Alethea? would be, *must* be won!"

"And shall be won, *amico*, if any help of mine can avail you," said Lady Castletowers. "I will speak to Gervase about it at once. He shall ask both the cousins down."

"Best friend," murmured the Italian, taking the hand which she extended to him, and pressing it gratefully in both his own.

"But beware! — not a word to him of all this. He has his English notions of hospitality — *tu comprends?*"

"Yes — it is true."

"Adieu, then, till lunch."

"Addio."

And the Countess, with a look of unusual preoc cupation on her fair brow, went slowly back to the house, thinking of many things: chiefly of how her son should some day marry an heiress, and how Olimpia Colonna should be disposed of to Saxon Trefalden.

CHAPTER XV.

Saxon Draws his First Cheque.

A TALL young man stood at the first floor window of a fashionable hotel in Piccadilly, drumming upon the plate glass panes, and staring listlessly down upon the crowded street below. It was about two o'clock in the day, and the brilliant thoroughfare was all alive with colour and sunshine; but his face took no joyousness from the busy scene. It wore, on the contrary, as gloomy and discontented an expression as such a bright young face could well put on. The ceaseless ebb and flow of gorgeous equipages; the fair pedestrians in their fashionable toilettes, even the little band of household troops riding by in helm and cuirass, failed apparently, to interest that weary spectator. He yawned, looked at his watch, took an impatient turn or two about the room, and then went back to the window, and drummed again upon the panes. Some books, an opera glass, and one or two newspapers lay on the table; but the leaves of the books were uncut, and only one of the newspapers had been unfolded. Too *ennuyé* to read, and too restless to sit still, this young man evidently found his time hang heavily upon his hands.

Presently a cab drove up to the hotel, and two gentlemen jumped out. The first of these was William Trefalden; the second, Lord Castletowers. William Trefalden looked up and nodded, as he came up the broad stone steps, and the watcher at the window ran joyously to meet him on the stairs.

"I'm so glad you've come!" was his eager exclama-

tion. "I've been watching for you, and the time has seemed so long!"

"I am only twenty minutes late," replied Mr. Trefalden, smiling.

"But it's so dreary here!"

"And I bring you a visitor," continued the other. "Lord Castletowers, allow me to present my cousin, Mr. Saxon Trefalden. Saxon, Lord Castletowers is so kind as to desire your acquaintance."

Saxon put out his hand, and gave the Earl's a hearty shake. He would as soon have thought of greeting his guest with a bow as of flinging him over the balcony into the street below.

"Thank you," said he. "I'm very much obliged to you."

"I am surprised that you find this situation 'dreary,' Mr. Trefalden," said Lord Castletowers, with a glance towards the window.

"I find all London dreary," replied Saxon, bluntly.

"May I ask how long you have been here?"

"About a week."

"Then you have really had no time to form an opinion."

"I have had time to be very miserable," said Saxon. "I never was so miserable in my life. The noise and hurry of London bewilder me. I can settle to nothing. I can think of nothing. I can do nothing. I find it impossible to read; and if I go out alone in the streets, I lose myself. Then there seems to be no air. I have inhaled smoke and dust, but I have not *breathed* since I came into the place."

"Your first impressions of our Babel are certainly *not couleur de rose*," said the Earl laughingly.

"They are *couleur de* Lothbury, and *couleur de* Chancery-lane," interposed William Trefalden. "My cousin, Lord Castletowers, has for the last four days been the victim of the law. We have been putting him in possession of his property, and he has seen nothing of town save the gold regions East of Temple Bar."

"An excellent beginning," said the Earl. "The finest pass into Belgravia is through Threadneedle-street."

"And the noblest prospect in London is the Bank of England," added the lawyer.

"I thought it very ugly and dirty," said Saxon innocently.

"I hope this law business is all over now," said Lord Castletowers.

"Yes, for the present; and Saxon has nothing to do but to amuse himself."

"Amuse myself!" echoed Saxon. "I must go home to do that."

"Because Reichenau is so gay, or because you find London so uninviting?" asked the Earl, with a smile.

"Because I am a born mountaineer, and because to me this place is a prison. I must have air to breathe, hills to climb, and a gun on my shoulder. *That* is what I call amusement."

"That is what I call amusement also," said Lord Castletowers; "and if you will come down to Surrey, I can give you plenty of it — a fishing-rod, and a hunter included. But in the meanwhile, you must let us prove to you that London is not so barren of entertainment as you seem to think."

"Let this help to prove it," said Mr. Trefalden, taking from his pocket a little oblong book in a green

paper cover. "There's magic in these pages, my dear fellow. They contain all the wit, wisdom, and beauty of the world we live in. While you have this in your pocket, you will never want for amusement — or friends; and when you have come to the end of the present volume, the publishers will furnish you with another."

"What is it?" said Saxon, turning it over somewhat doubtfully.

"A cheque-book."

"Pshaw! money again — always money!"

"Don't speak of it disrespectfully. You have more than you can count, and as yet you neither know what it is worth, nor what to do with it."

"Pray enlighten me, then," said Saxon, with a touch of impatience in his voice. "Tell me, in the first place, what it *is* worth?"

"That is a matter of individual opinion," replied Mr. Trefalden, with one of his quiet smiles. "If you ask Lord Castletowers, he will probably tell you that it is worth less than noble blood, bright eyes, or Italian liberty. If you ask a plodding fellow like myself, he will probably value it above all three."

"Well then, in the second place, what am I to do with it?"

"Spend it."

Saxon shrugged his shoulders; and Lord Castletowers, who had coloured up somewhat angrily the minute before, laughed, and said that it was good advice.

"Spend it," repeated the lawyer, "You never will know how to employ your money till you acquire the art of getting rid of it. You have yet to learn that instead of turning every thing into gold, like Midas,

you can turn gold into everything. It is the true secret of the transmutation of metal."

"Shall I be any the wiser or happier for this knowledge?" asked Saxon, with a sigh.

"You cannot help being the wiser," laughed his cousin; "nor, I should think, the happier. You will cease to be 'dreary' in the first place. He who has plenty of money, and knows how to spend it, is never in want of entertainment."

"Ay, *and knows how!* There is my difficulty."

"If you had read Molière," replied Mr. Trefalden, "you would be aware that a rich man has discernment in his purse."

"Cousin, you are laughing at me."

It was said with perfect good humour, but with such directness that even Mr. Trefalden's practised self-possession was momentarily troubled.

"But I suppose you think a rich fellow can afford to be laughed at," added Saxon, "and I am quite of your opinion. It will help to civilise me, and that, you know, is your mission. And now for a lesson in alchemy. What shall I transmute my gold into first?"

"Nay, into whatever seems to you to be best worth the trouble," replied Mr. Trefalden. "First of all, I should say, into a certain amount of superfine Saxony and other cloths; into a large stock of French kid and French cambric — and a valet. After that — well, after that, suppose you ask Lord Castletowers' opinion."

"I vote for a tall horse, a short tiger, and a cab," said the young Earl.

"And chambers in St. James's-street," suggested the lawyer.

"And a stall at Gye's."

"And all the flowers, pictures, Baskerville editions, Delphin classics, organs, and Etruscan antiquities you take it into your head to desire! That's the way to transmute your metal, you happy fellow! Taken as a philosophical experiment, I know nothing more beautiful, simple, and satisfactory."

"You bewilder me," said poor Saxon. "You speak a language which is partly jest and partly earnest, and I know not where the earnestness ends, or where the jest begins. What is it that you really mean? I am quite willing to do what you conceive a man in my position should do; but you must show me how to set about it."

"I am here to-day for no other purpose."

"And more than this, you must give me leave to reject your system, if I dislike, or grow weary of it."

"What! return to roots and woad after Kühn and Stultz?"

"Certainly, if I find the roots more palatable, and the woad more becoming."

"Agreed. Then we begin at once. You shall put yourself under my guidance, and that of Lord Castletowers. You shall obey us implicitly for the next six or eight hours, and you shall begin by writing a cheque for five hundred, which we can cash at Drummond's as we go along."

"With all my heart," said Saxon; and so, aided by his cousin's instructions, sat down and wrote his first cheque.

"He's a capital fellow," said Lord Castletowers to Mr. Trefalden, as they went down the hotel stairs; "a splendid fellow, and I like him thoroughly. Shall I

propose him at the Erectheum? He ought to belong to a club, and I know some men there who would be delighted to do what they could for any member of my introduction."

"By all means. It is the very thing for him," replied Mr. Trefalden. "He must have acquaintances, you know; and it is out of the question that a busy man like myself should do the honours of town to him, or anyone. Were he my own brother, I would not undertake it."

"And I am never here myself for many days at a time," said the Earl. "London is an expensive luxury, and I am obliged to make a little of it go a long way. However, while I am here, and whenever I am here, it will give me a great deal of pleasure to show Mr. Saxon Trefalden any attention in my power."

"You are very kind. Saxon, my dear fellow, Lord Castletowers is so good as to offer to get you into the Erectheum."

"The Erectheum of Athens?" exclaimed Saxon, opening his blue eyes in laughing astonishment.

"Nonsense — of Pall Mall. It is a fashionable club."

"I am much obliged to Lord Castletowers," replied Saxon, vaguely. But he had no more notion of the nature, objects, or aims of a fashionable club than a Bedouin Arab.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Erectheum.

"No, by Jove, Brandon, not a bit of a snob! As green as an Arcadian, but no more of a snob than—"

Sir Charles Burgoyne was going to say, "than you are;" but he changed his mind, and said, instead:—

"— than Castletowers himself."

"I call any man a snob who quotes Bion and Moschus in his familiar talk," replied the other, all unconscious of his friend's hesitation. "How the deuce is one to remember anything about Bion and Moschus? and what right has he to make a fellow look like a fool?"

"Unfeeling, I admit," replied Sir Charles, languidly.

"I hate your learned people," said Brandon, irritably. "And I hate parvenus. Ignorant parvenus are bad enough; but learned parvenus are the worst of all. He's both — hang him!"

"Hang him, by all means!" said another young man, approaching the window at which the two were standing. "May I ask who he is, and what he has done?"

It was in one of the princely reading-rooms of the Erectheum Club, Pall-Mall. The two first speakers were the Honourable Edward Brandon, third and youngest son of Hardicanute, fourteenth Earl of Ipswich, and Sir Charles Burgoyne, Baronet, of the Second Life Guards.

There are men whom nature seems to have run up

by contract, and the Honourable Edward Brandon was one of them. He was just like one of those slight, unsubstantial, fashionable houses that spring up every day like mushrooms about Bayswater and South Kensington, and are hired under the express condition of never being danced in. He was very young, very tall, and as economically supplied with brain and muscle as a man could well be. The very smallest appreciable weight of knowledge would have broken down his understanding at any moment; and his little ornaments of manner were all in the flimsiest modern taste, and of the merest stucco. He "dipped" occasionally into "Bell's Life" and the "Court Circular." He had read half of the first volume of "Mr. Soapey Sponge's Sporting Tour." He played croquet pretty well, and billiards very badly, and was saturated through and through with smoke, like a Finnan haddock.

Sir Charles Burgoyne was a man of a very different stamp. He was essentially one of a class; but then, ethnologically speaking, his class was many degrees higher than that of Mr. Brandon. He was better built, and better furnished. He rode well; was a good shot; played a first-rate game at billiards; was gifted with a certain lazy impertinence of speech and manner that passed for wit, and was so effeminately fair of complexion and regular of feature, that he was popularly known among his brother officers as "The Beauty."

The last comer — short, sallow, keen-eyed, somewhat flippant in his address, and showy in his attire — was Laurence Greatorex, Esquire, only son, heir, and partner of Sir Samuel Greatorex, Knight, the well-known banker and alderman of Lombard-street, City.

"Hang him, by all means!" said this gentleman,

with charming impartiality. "Who is he? and what has he done?"

"We were speaking of the new member," replied Brandon.

"What, Crœsus Trefalden? Pshaw! The man's an outer barbarian. What social enormity has he been committing now?"

"He's been offending Brandon's delicate sense of propriety by quoting Greek," said The Beauty.

"Greek! Unpardonable offence! What shall we do to him? Muzzle him?"

"Condemn him to feed on Greek roots for the term of his natural life, like Timon of Athens," suggested the Beauty, lazily.

"He's little better than a savage as it is," said Mr. Greatorex, with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders. "He knows nothing of life, and cares nothing for it, either. Last Tuesday, when all the fellows were wild about the great fight down at Barney's Croft, he sat and read Homer, as if it were the news of the day. He's an animated anachronism — that's what he is, Sir Charles."

"Who the deuce is he?" ejaculated Brandon. "Where does he come from?"

"Heaven knows! His father was a black letter folio, I believe, and his mother a palimpsest."

"You're too witty to-day, Mr. Greatorex," sneered Burgoyne.

"Then he's so offensively rich! Why, he put down a thousand yesterday for Willis's subscription! There's his name at the head of the list! Makes us look rather small — eh?"

"Confound his assurance!" broke out Brandon. "He's not been here much more than a week! What's Willis to him, that he should give more than the oldest members of the club?"

"Well, it's a munificent donation," said the Guardsman, good-naturedly.

"Munificent? Hang his munificence! I suppose the members of the Erectheum can pension off a secretary, who has served them for fifteen years, without the help of a thousand pounds from a puppy like that!"

"Your virtuous indignation, Brandon, is quite refreshing," said Burgoyne. "How long have *you* been here, for instance? Half a year?"

"It was in bad taste, anyhow," said Greatorex; "deuced bad taste. It's always the way with your *nouveaux riches*. A man who had been wealthy all his life would have known better."

"Yourself, *par exemple*," retorted the Guardsman, insolently.

"Just so, Sir Charles; but then I'm to the money-market born, so hardly a case in point."

"Where did this Trefalden get his fortune?" asked Brandon. "I've heard that some fellow left it to him a hundred years ago, and that it has been accumulating ever since; but that's nonsense, of course."

"Sounds like a pecuniary version of the 'Sleeping Beauty,'" observed the baronet, parenthetically.

"I know no more than you do, Mr. Brandon," replied Greatorex. "I have heard only the common story of how this money has been lying at compound interest for a century or more, and has devolved to our pre-Adamite friend at last, bringing him as many

millions as he has fingers. Some say double that sum; but ten are enough for my credulity."

"Does he bank with Sir Samuel?" asked Brandon.

"No. Our shop lies too far east for him, I suspect. He has taken his millions to Drummond's. By the way, Sir Charles, what have you decided upon doing with that brown mare of yours? You seemed half inclined to part from her a few days ago."

"You mean the Lady of Lyons?"

"I do."

"Sold her, Mr. Greatorex."

"Sold her, Sir Charles?"

"Yes — cab and all."

The banker turned very red, and bit his lip.

"Would it be a liberty to ask the name of the purchaser?" said he.

"Perhaps it would," replied the Guardsman. "But I don't mind telling you. It's Mr. Trefalden."

"Trefalden! Then, upon my soul, Sir Charles, it's too bad! I'm sorry to hear it. I am, indeed. I had hoped — in fact, I had expected — upon my soul, I had expected, Sir Charles, that you would have given me the opportunity. Money would have been no object. I would have given a fancy price for that mare with pleasure."

"Thank you, I did not want a fancy price," replied the Guardsman, haughtily.

"Besides, if you'll excuse me, Sir Charles, I must say I don't think it was quite fair, either."

"Fair?" echoed Burgoyne. "Really, Mr. Greatorex, I do not apprehend your meaning."

"Well, you know, Sir Charles, I spoke first; and

as for Crœsus Trefalden, who scarcely knows a horse from a buffalo. . . . ."

"Mr. Saxon Trefalden is the friend of Lord Castletowers," interrupted Burgoyne, still more haughtily, "and I was very happy to oblige him."

If Sir Charles Burgoyne had not been a baronet, a Guardsman, and a member of the Erectheum club, it is possible that Mr. Greatorex of Lombard-street would have given him the retort uncourteous; but as matters stood, he only grew a little redder; looked at his watch in some confusion; and prudently swallowed his annoyance.

"Oh, of course — in that case," stammered he — "Lord Castletowers being your friend, I have nothing more to say. Do you go down to his place in Surrey next week, by-the-by?"

"Do *you?*" said Burgoyne, smoothing his flaxen moustache, and looking down at the small city man with half closed eyes.

"I hope so, since his lordship has been kind enough to invite me; but we are so deucedly busy in Lombard-street just now that . . . . pshaw! twelve o'clock already, and I am due in the city at twenty minutes past. Not a moment to lose. 'I know a bank,' et cætera — but there's no wild time there for anybody between twelve and three! Good morning, Mr. Brandon. Good morning, Sir Charles."

The baronet bent his head about a quarter of an inch, and almost before the other was out of hearing, said:

"That man is a *bourgeois* to the tips of his fingers, and insufferably familiar. Why do you tolerate him, Brandon?"

"Oh, he's not a bad fellow," replied Brandon.

"He's a snob, *pur et simple* — a snob, with the wardrobe of a tailor's assistant, and the manners of a valet. You called young Trefalden a snob just now, and I told you it was a mistake. Apply the title to this little money-jobber, and I won't contradict you. The fact is, Brandon, I abominate him. I wish it was possible to blackball him out of the club. If I'd been in town when he was proposed, I'll be hanged if he should have ever got in. I can't think what you fellows were about, to admit him!"

Charley Burgoyne was a lazy man, for him, this was a very long and energetic speech. But the Honorable Edward Brandon only shook his head in a helpless, irritable way, and repeated his former assertion.

"I tell you, Burgoyne," he said, "Greatorex isn't a bad fellow."

Sir Charles Burgoyne shrugged his shoulders, and yawned.

"Oh, very well," he replied. "Have it your own way. I hate argument."

"Castletowers likes him," said the young man. "Castletowers asks him down to Surrey, you see."

"Castletowers is too good natured by half."

"And Vaughan. . . ."

"Vaughan owes him money, and just endures him."

The Honorable Edward Brandon rubbed his head all over, looking more helpless and more irritable than before. It was a very small head, and there was very little in it.

"Confound him!" groaned he. "He has taken up paper of mine, too. I *must* be civil to him."

Sir Charles Burgoyne gave utterance to a dismal whistle; thrust his hands deep down into his pockets; and said nothing.

"What else can I do?" said Brandon.

"Pay him."

"You might as well tell me to eat him."

"Nonsense. Borrow the money from somebody else."

"I wish I could. I wish I knew whom to ask. I should be so very grateful, you know. It's only two hundred and fifty."

And the young fellow stared hard at the Guardsman, who stared just as hard at the Duke of York's column over the way.

"You can't suggest any one?" he continued, after a moment.

"I, my dear fellow? Diable! I haven't an idea."

"You — couldn't manage it for me yourself, I suppose?"

Sir Charles Burgoyne took his hands from his pockets, and his hat from a neighbouring peg.

"Edward Brandon," he said, impressively, "I'm as poor as Saint Simeon Stylites."

"Never heard of the fellow in my life," said Brandon, peevishly. "Who is he?"

"My dear boy, your religious education has been neglected. Look for him in your catechism, and, 'when found, make a note of.'"

"I'll tell you what it is, Burgoyne," said Brandon, suspicious of "chaff," and, like all weak people when they are out of temper, slightly spiteful — "poor, or not poor, you're a clever fellow at a bargain. Talk of you're not wanting a fancy price, indeed! What's five

hundred guineas if it's not a fancy price, I should like to know?"

"*Mon enfant*, you know nothing about it," said the Guardsman placidly.

"I know it was an awful lot too much for that mare and cab."

"The mare and cab were dirt cheap at the money."

"Cheap! cheap — when to my certain knowledge you only gave a hundred and twenty for the Lady of Lyons, and have had the best part of two seasons out of her since!"

The Beauty listened with an imperturbable smile, drew on his gloves, buttoned them, adjusted his hat, and, having done all these things with studied deliberation, replied: —

"My dear Brandon, I really envy your memory. Cultivate it, my good fellow, and it will be a credit to you. *Au revoir.*"

With this he went over to the nearest glass, corrected the tie of his cravat, and sauntered towards the door. He had not reached it, however, when he paused, turned, and came back again.

"By-the-by," said he, "if you're in any present difficulty, and actually want that two hundred and fifty — *do* you want it?"

"Oh, by Jove, don't I! Never wanted it so much in my life."

"Well, then, there's Trefalden. He's as rich as the Bank of England, and flings his money about like water. Ask him, Brandon. He'll be sure to lend it to you. *Vale.*"

And the baronet once more turned on his heel, leaving his irritable young friend to swear off his in-

dignation as best he could. Whereupon the Honorable Edward Brandon, addressing himself apparently to the Duke of York upon his column, did swear with "bated breath" and remarkable fluency; rubbed his head frantically, till he looked like an electrical doll; and finally betook himself to the billiard room.

When they were both gone, a gentleman who had been sitting in the adjoining window, entrenched behind, and apparently absorbed in, the "Times" of the day, laid his paper aside; entered a couple of names in his pocket-book, smiling quietly the while; and then left the room. He paused on his way out, to speak to the hall porter.

"I have waited for Mr. Trefalden," he said, "till I can wait no longer. You are sure he has not gone upstairs?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"Be so good, then, as to give him this card, and say, if you please, that I will call upon him at his chambers to-morrow."

The porter laid the card aside with the new member's letters, of which there were several. It bore the name of William Trefalden.

CHAPTER XVII.

Saxon at Home.

"Mr. Trefalden."

Thus announced by a stately valet, who received him with marked condescension in the antechamber, and even deigned to open the door of the reception-room beyond, Mr. Trefalden passed into his cousin's presence. He was not alone. Lord Castletowers and Sir Charles Burgoyne were there; Lord Castletowers leaning familiarly over the back of Saxon's chair, dictating the words of a letter which Saxon was writing; Sir Charles Burgoyne extended at full length on a sofa, smoking a cigarette with his eyes closed. Both visitors were obviously as much at home as if in their own chambers. They had been breakfasting with Saxon, and the table was yet loaded with pâtés, coffee, liqueurs, and all the luxurious etceteras of a second *déjeûner*.

Saxon flung away his pen, sprang forward, seized his cousin by both hands, and poured forth a torrent of greetings.

"How good of you to come," he exclaimed, "after having taken the trouble to go yesterday to the club! I was so sorry to miss you! I meant to hunt you up this very afternoon in Chancery-lane. I have been an ungrateful fellow not to do so a week ago, and I'm sure I don't know how to excuse myself. I've thought of you, Cousin William, every day."

"I should have been sorry to bring you into the dingy atmosphere of the City," said Mr. Trefalden, pleasantly. "I had far rather see you thus, enjoying the good things which the gods have provided for you."

And with this, Mr. Trefalden shook hands with Lord Castletowers, hoped Lady Castletowers was well, bowed to Sir Charles Burgoyne, and dropped into an easy chair.

"You were writing," he said, "when I came in. Pray go on."

Saxon blushed scarlet.

"Oh, no," he said, shyly, "the letters can wait."

"So can I — and smoke a cigar in the meanwhile."

"They — that is, Lord Castletowers was helping me to write them — telling me what to say, in fact. He calls me 'The Impolite Letter Writer,' and says I must learn to turn fine phrases, and say the elegant things that nobody means."

"The things that nobody means are the things that everybody likes," said the Earl.

"I have often wished," said Burgoyne, from the sofa, "that some clever person would write a handbook of civil speeches — a sort of 'Ready Liar,' you know, or 'Perjuror's Companion.' It would save a fellow so much trouble!"

"I wish there were such a book, if only to teach *you* better manners," retorted Castletowers.

"I don't pretend to have the manners of a lord," said the Beauty, languidly.

"If you were the lord of my manors, you wouldn't have many to boast of," replied Castletowers, with a light-hearted laugh.

Burgoyne opened his eyes, and took the cigarette from his mouth.

"Listen to this fellow!" said he, "this bloated capitalist, who talks like a Diogenes turned out of his tub! Castletowers, I am ashamed of you."

"Compare me to Diogenes, if you like," replied the Earl; "but to a Diogenes who has a dear old Elizabethan tub still left, thank Heaven! and a few old oaks to shelter it. Few enough, and old enough, more's the pity!"

"And I," said Burgoyne, with a yawn, "haven't a stick of timber left, barring my genealogical tree. My last oaks vanished in the last Derby."

The Earl looked at his watch.

"If this note is to be delivered by two o'clock," said he, "it must be finished at once; and since Mr. Trefalden gives us leave . . . ."

"I do not only give leave," said Mr. Trefalden. "I entreat."

Saxon took up his pen, and pointing to a heap of notes on the mantelshelf, said: —

"You will find one there for yourself, cousin William; and you must be sure to come."

"Invitations, young man?"

"Yes, to a dinner at Richmond, next Saturday."

Mr. Trefalden put the note in his pocket unopened; smoked away with a quiet, meditative smile, and took a leisurely survey of the room as the dictation proceeded. Not one of its multitudinous details escaped him — not one but told him some anecdote of the last ten days of Saxon's new life. There were several pictures standing about on chairs, or leaning against the walls. Some were painted in oils and some in water colours, and nearly all were views in Switzerland. There were piles of new music; stacks of costly books in rich bindings; boxes of cigars and gloves; a bust of Shakespeare in marble; a harmonium; a cabinet of Florentine mosaic-work; a marvellous

Etruscan vase on a pedestal of *verde antico;* a couple of silver-mounted rifles; a sideboard loaded with knickknacks in carved ivory, crystal, silver filagree, and egg-shell china; and a sofa-table heaped with notes, visiting cards, loose silver, and tradesmen's bills. On the chimney-piece stood a pair of bronze tazzas, a silver inkstand with a little Cupid perched upon the lid, and a *giallo* model of the Parthenon. A gold-headed riding whip, and a pair of foils lay on the top of the harmonium; and a faded bouquet in a tumbler occupied a bracket, from which a French pendule had been ignominiously displaced. William Trefalden was an observant man, and drew his inferences from these trifles. He found out that his young Arcadian was learning to ride, fence, make acquaintances, and spend his money royally. Above all, he took note of the bouquet on the bracket. There was nothing remarkable about it. It was just like five hundred other bouquets that one sees in the course of a season; and yet Mr. Trefalden looked at it more than once, and smiled under cover of a cloud of smoke each time that he did so.

"— *and that you will permit me to have the great pleasure of driving you down in the afternoon,*" said Lord Castletowers, dictating over Saxon's shoulder.

"Drive her down!" echoed the scribe, in dismay. "*I* drive her from London to Richmond?"

"Of course. Why not?"

"I can't. I don't drive well enough. I have never driven anything but an old blind mare in a rickety Swiss charette, in my life. I should break her neck and my own too!"

"Oh, never mind. You can give the reins to Burgoyne or to me. It doesn't matter."

"Then how shall I put it? Shall I say '*and that you will permit Lord Castletowers to have the pleasure of . . . .*'"

"Nonsense! Write what I told you at first, and leave me to arrange it, when it comes to the point."

Saxon shook his head.

"No, no," said he. "I must not ask to be allowed the pleasure of driving her down, when I know all the time I am not going to do anything of the sort. It wouldn't be true."

A faint blush mounted to the Earl's honest brow; but Sir Charles Burgoyne smiled compassionately.

"Suppose, now," said Saxon, "that I tell her I've bought a new phaeton, and hope she will accept a seat in it on Saturday — will that do!"

"Famously. She'll of course conclude that you drive, and the rest is easily managed when the time comes. Let's see how it reads . . . . hum . . . . '*which I trust you will honour with your presence; also that you will permit me to offer you a seat in my phaeton, if the day be fine enough for my friends to drive down in open carriages.*'"

"*Open carriages*," repeated Saxon, as his pen travelled to the end of the sentence. "Anything more?"

"No; I think that is enough."

"Then I only add — '*yours very truly, Saxon Trefalden*,' I suppose?"

"Heaven forbid!"

"Isn't it polite enough?" asked Saxon, laughing.

"Polite enough? Didn't I tell you half an hour ago that to be commonly polite is nothing in a case like this? You must approach her on your knees, my dear fellow, and offer up your little Richmond dinner

as if it were a burnt sacrifice to the immortal gods! Say — '*Condescend, madam, to accept my respectful homage, and allow me to subscribe myself with the profoundest admiration, your obedient and faithful servant, Saxon Trefalden.*' That's the way to put it, Burgoyne?"

"Oh, unquestionably," yawned that gentleman, "You can't crowd too much sail."

"May I inquire to which Princess of the Blood Royal this letter is addressed?" asked Mr. Trefalden.

"To a far greater She than any princess," replied Castletowers. "To the prima donna of the season — to the Graziana herself!"

Mr. Trefalden slightly elevated his eyebrows on receiving this tremendous information, but said nothing.

"And she's the grandest creature!" ejaculated Saxon, now folding and sealing his note. "Burgoyne, introduced me to her last night, behind the scenes. You can't think what a gracious manner she has, Cousin William!"

"Really?"

"She gave me that bouquet up there — it had just been thrown to her."

"How condescending!"

"Wasn't it? — and I such an utter stranger — a nobody, you know! I felt, I assure you, as if I were in the presence of Juno herself. There, the note's quite ready."

And Saxon, all unconscious of the faint touch of sarcasm in his cousin's voice, lifted up his bright young face with a smile of boyish exultation, and rang the bell.

"Gillingwater, send Curtis at once with this note, and tell him to wait for an answer. Anybody here?"

"Young man from Facet and Carat's, sir, with case of jules. Young man from Cartridge and Trigger's, with harms. Passle from Colnaggy's; passle from Breidenback's; passle from Fortnum and Mason's; passle from Crammer and Beale's," replied Saxon's magnificent valet.

"The parcels can wait. The messengers may come in?"

Mr. Gillingwater retired, and the "young men" were immediately ushered in; one with a small mahogany box under his arm; the other carrying a still smaller morocco case. The first contained a brace of costly inlaid pistols; the second, three bracelets of different designs.

"By Jove, what pistols!" exclaimed Castletowers.

"Look here, Burgoyne, did you ever see such finish?"

"Never. They might be worn by the sultan."

"They are exact facsimiles of those made for His Highness the Maharajah of Jubblepore," observed the messenger.

Sir Charles examined the weapons with the interest of a connoisseur.

"What a Bashaw you are, Trefalden!" he said. "We shall have you cantering down Rotten-row on a white elephant before long. These are really the most gorgeous pistols I have seen. Who are the bangles for? The Graziana?"

"One of them, if . . . ."

"If what?"

"If you think she would p[illegible]ended?"

"Offended, my dear fellow! Is pussy offended if you offer her a cup of milk? or Carlo, if you present him with a bone?"

"What do you mean?" said Saxon, quite shocked at the levity of these comparisons.

"I mean that every woman would sell her soul for a handful of diamonds, and an ounce of wrought gold, and that our fair friend is no exception to the rule. What put it into your head, Trefalden, to give her a bracelet?"

"It was Mr. Greatorex's idea."

"Humph! Just like him. Greatorex has such generous impulses — at other people's expense!"

"I was very much obliged to him for thinking of it," said Saxon, somewhat warmly. "As I am to any friend who is kind enough to tell me what the customs of society are," he added, more gently.

"They are very beautiful bracelets, all three of them," said Lord Castletowers.

"That's right. Which shall I take?"

The garter set with rubies," said Sir Charles Burgoyne.

"The snake with the diamond head," said the Earl.

"The opals and diamonds," said William Trefalden.

Saxon laughed, and shook his head.

"If you each give me different advice," said he, "what am I to do?"

"Choose for yourself," replied his cousin.

And so Saxon, very diffidently and hesitatingly, chose for himself, and took the one his cousin had preferred.

"And pray what may be the cost of this magnificent trifle?" asked Mr. Trefalden, when the choice was made, and the messengers had made their bows and vanished.

"I have no idea," replied Saxon.

"Do you mean that you have bought it without having made any inquiry as to its price?"

"Of course."

"Pray do you never inquire before you purchase?"

"Never. Why do you smile?"

"Because I fear your tradesmen will charge you at any fabulous rate they please."

"Why, so they could in any case! What do I know, for instance, of opals and diamonds, except that the opal is a hydrate of silica, and the diamond a compound of charcoal and oxygen? They might ask me what price they pleased for this bracelet, and I, in my ignorance of its value, should buy it, just the same."

"It is well for you, Trefalden, that you have the purse of Fortunatus to dip your hand into," said Sir Charles Burgoyne.

"But even Fortunatus must take care that his purse has no hole in the bottom of it," added Mr. Trefalden. "You are a bad financier, my dear Saxon; and you and I must have a little practical conversation some day on these matters. By the way, I have really some business points to discuss with you. When can you give up an hour or two to pure and unmixed boredom?"

"When you please, cousin William."

"Well — this evening?"

"This evening, unfortun· re promised to

dine at the club with Greatorex, and two or three others, and we are going afterwards to the opera."

"To-morrow evening, then?"

"And to-morrow my new phaeton is coming home, and we are going in it to Blackwall — Lord Castletowers and Sir Charles Burgoyne, I mean."

"Then, on Saturday——"

"On Saturday, I hope you will join us at Richmond. Don't forget it, cousin William. You have the note, you know, in your pocket."

Mr. Trefalden smiled somewhat gravely.

"Are you already such an epicurean that you want the traditional skeleton at your feast?" said he. "No, no, Saxon. I am a man of business, and have no leisure for such symposia. You must dispense with my grim presence — and I, apparently, must dispense with yours. I had no notion that you were such a man of fashion as to have all your evenings engaged in this manner."

"I can't think how it is," replied Saxon, in some confusion. "I certainly have made more appointments than I was aware of. My friends are so kind to me, and plan so many things to give me pleasure, that — will Sunday do, cousin William? You might come up here and dine with me; or we might——"

"I am always engaged on Sundays," said Mr. Trefalden, drily.

"Then on Monday?"

"Yes, I can see you on Monday, if you will really be at leisure."

"Of course, I will be at leisure."

"But you must come to me. I shall be very busy, and can only see you after office hours."

"I will come to you, cousin, at any time you please," said Saxon, earnestly.

"At eight in the evening?"

"At eight."

Mr. Trefalden entered the hour and date in his pocket-book, and rose to take his leave.

"I had hoped that you would spare me a day or two next week, Mr. Trefalden," said Lord Castletowers, as they shook hands at parting. "Your cousin has promised to come down, and we have a meet and some parties coming off; and a breath of country air would do you good before the summer sets in."

But Mr. Trefalden shook his head.

"I thank you, Lord Castletowers," he replied; "but it is impossible. I am as firmly chained to Chancery-lane for the next five months as any galley-slave to his oar."

"But, my dear sir, is it worth any man's while to be a galley-slave, if he can help it?" asked the Earl.

"Perhaps. It depends on the motive; and self-imposed chains are never very heavy to the wearer."

And with this, Mr. Trefalden bowed to both gentlemen, and left the room, followed by his cousin.

"That's a quiet, deep fellow," said Burgoyne.

"He is a very gentlemanly, pleasant, clever man," replied the Earl, "and has been our solicitor for years."

"I don't like him."

"You don't know him."

"True — do you?"

Lord Castletowers hesitated.

"Well, upon my soul," laughed he, "I cannot say

that I do, personally. But, as I tell you, he is my solicitor, and I like him. I only speak from my impressions."

"And I from mine. He is not my solicitor, and I don't like him. He thinks too much, and says too little."

In the meanwhile, Saxon was warmly wringing his cousin's hand at the door of the ante-room, and saying, in a low, earnest tone,

"Indeed you must not suppose I have become a man of fashion, or an epicurean, cousin William; or that I would not rather — far rather — spend an evening with you than at any of these fine places. I am so very sorry I cannot come to you before Monday."

"Monday will be quite soon enough, my dear Saxon," replied Mr. Trefalden, kindly; "and I am glad to see you so well amused. At eight o'clock, then?"

"Yes, at eight. You will see how punctual I shall be — and you must give me some good advice, cousin William, and always tell me of my faults — won't you?"

"Humph! That will depend on circumstances, and yourself. In the meanwhile, don't buy any more diamond bracelets without first inquiring the price."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Timon.

"It is good to be merry and wise," saith an old song; but every man cannot be a laughing philosopher, and though it is comparatively easy to be either merry or wise "upon occasion," it is supremely difficult to be both at the same time. The two conditions mix almost as reluctantly as oil and water, and youth seldom makes even an effort to combine them. Happy youth, whose best wisdom it is, after all, to be merry while it may! Which of us would not gladly barter this bitter wisdom of later years for but a single season — nay, a single day — of that happy thoughtless time when the simplest jest provoked a laugh, and the commonest wayside flower had a beauty long since faded, and all life was a pleasant carnival? What would we not give to believe once more in the eternity of college friendships, and the immortality of prize poems? — to feel our hearts beat high over the pages of Plutarch and Livy? — to weep delicious tears for the woes of Mrs. Haller, and to devour the old romances with the old omnivorous relish?

Alas! the college friend and the prize poem are alike forgotten; Sir George Cornewall Lewis has laid his ruthless hand upon our favourite heroes; our souls abhor the very name of Kotzebue; and we could no more revive our interest in those two mounted cavaliers who might have been seen spurring by twilight across a lonely heath in the west of England some two hundred and odd years ago, than we could undertake to enjoy

the thirteen thousand pages of Mademoiselle Scudéry's Grand Cyrus. Aye, that pleasant dream is indeed over; but its joys are "lodg'd beyond the reach of fate," and of the remembrance of them no man can disinherit us. Have we not all lived in Arcadia?

Wisdom apart, however, what more commendable merriment may there be than a dinner at Richmond when the year and the guests are young, and the broad landscape lies steeped in sunshine, and the afternoon air is sweet with new-mown hay, and the laugh follows the jest as quickly and gaily as the frothing champagne follows the popping of the corks? Now and then a tiny skiff with one white sail skims down the molten gold of the broad river. The plumy islands and the wooded flats look hazy in the tender mist of sunset. A pleasant sound of gay voices and chinking glasses finds its way now and then from the open window below, or the adjoining balcony; and, perhaps, the music of a brass band comes to us from the lower town, harmonised by distance.

Thus bright and propitious was it on the eventful day of Saxon's "little dinner;" and care had been taken by his friends that every detail of the entertainment should be as faultless as the weather itself. The guests had all been driven down in open carriages; the costliest dinner that money could ensure, or taste devise, was placed before them; and the best room in the famous hotel was pre-engaged for the occasion. It had seldom held a more joyous party.

Lord Castletowers and Major Vaughan were there of course, having run up from Surrey for the day; Sir Charles Burgoyne, serenely insolent; the Hon. Edward Brandon, with his hair standing up like the wig of an

electrified doll, from inward excitement and outward rubbing; Mr. Lawrence Greatorex, looking, perhaps, somewhat abstracted from time to time, but talking fluently; two other Erectheum men, both very young and prone to laughter, and both highly creditable to their tailors and bootmakers; and last, though not least, the Graziana and her party. For actresses, like misfortunes, never come alone. Like Scottish chieftains, they travel with a "tail," and have an embarrassing aptitude for bringing their uninvited "tail" on all kinds of inconvenient occasions. In the present instance, the heroine of the day had contented herself with only two sisters and a brother; and her young host not only welcomed them with all his honest heart, but thought it very kind and condescending on her part to bring them at all. The brother was a gloomy youth, who said little, ate a great deal, and watched the company in a furtive manner over the rim of his wine-glass. The sisters were fat, black-eyed little souls, who chattered, flirted, and drank champagne incessantly. As for the prima donna herself, she was a fine, buxom, laughter-loving creature of about twenty years of age, as little like a Juno, and as much like a grown-up child as it is only possible for a Neapolitan woman to be. She could be majestic enough upon the stage, or in the green-room; but she never carried her dignity beyond the precincts of the opera house. She put it on with her rouge, and left it in her dressing-room with the rest of her theatrical wardrobe, when the evening's work was over. She laughed at everything that was said, whether she understood it or not; and she was delighted with everything — with the drive, with the horses, with the mail phaeton, with the

weather, with the dinner, with the guests, and with her host; and when the ice was brought to table — a magnificent, many-coloured triumph of art — she clapped her hands, like a child at sight of a twelfth-cake.

"Now's the time for the bracelet, Saxon," whispered Lord Castletowers, when the wreck of this triumph was removed, and the sidecloths were rolled away for dessert.

Saxon looked aghast.

"What shall I say?" said he.

"Oh, I don't know — something graceful, and not too long."

"But I can't. I haven't an idea."

"Never mind; she wouldn't understand it if you had. Say anything."

"Can't you say it for me?"

"Impossible, my dear fellow! You might as well ask me to kiss her for you."

Which was such a tremendous supposition, that Saxon blushed scarlet, and had not a word to say in reply.

"Ah, *traditor!* Why do you speak secrets?" said the prima donna, with a pout.

"Because he is a conspirator, signora," replied the Earl.

"A conspirator? Cielo!"

"It is quite true," said Burgoyne, promptly. "There's a deadly mine of cracker bonbons in the room below, and Trefalden's presently going to say something so sparkling that it will fire the train, and we shall all be blown into the middle of the next century."

The prima donna sang a roulade expressive of terror.

"But the worst is yet to come. This plot, signora, is entirely against yourself," said Castletowers. Then, dropping his voice, "out with it, man," he added. "You couldn't have a better opening."

So Saxon pulled the morocco case out of his pocket, and presented it with as much confusion and incoherence as if it had been a warrant.

The signora screamed with rapture, invoked her brother and sisters, flew to the window with her treasure, flashed it to and fro in every possible light, and for the first five minutes could talk nothing but her native patois.

"But, signore, you must be a great prince!" she exclaimed, when, at length, she returned to her place at the dinner-table.

"Indeed, I am nothing of the sort," replied Saxon, laughing.

"*E bellissimo, questo braccioletto!* But why do you give him to me?"

"From no other reason than my desire to please you, bella donna," replied Saxon. "The Greeks believed that the opal had power to confer popularity on its wearer; but I do not offer you these opals with any such motive. Your talisman is your voice."

"Bravo, Trefalden!" laughed the Earl. "That was very well said. *Comme l'esprit vient aux fils!*"

"A neat thing spoilt," muttered Greatorex to his next neighbour. "He should have praised her eyes. She knows all about her voice."

"And do you suppose she doesn't know all about

her eyes, too?" asked his neighbour — who chanced to be Major Vaughan.

"No doubt, but then a woman is never tired of being admired for her beauty. The smallest pastille of praise is as acceptable to her, in its way, as a holocaust of incense. But as to her voice, *c'est autre chose.* What is one compliment more or less after the nightly applauses of the finest audience in Europe?"

In the meanwhile, the two young Erectheum men, oppressed apparently by the consciousness of how much they owed to their boots and waistcoats, took refuge in each other's society, and talked about a horse. Neither of them kept a horse, or hoped to keep a horse; and yet the subject seemed bound up, in some occult way, with the inner consciousness of both. They discussed this mysterious animal in solemn whispers, all the way down from London to Richmond; alluded to him despondingly during dinner; and exchanged bets upon him in a moody and portentous manner at dessert. Apart from this overwhelming topic, they were light-hearted young fellows enough; but the horse was their Nemesis, and rode them down continually.

As for the "tail," it went to work as vigorously upon the dessert as upon the twelve preceding courses. The plump sisters evidently looked upon Moet as pure Pierian, and had taken Pope's advice to heart; while the gloomy brother, inaccessible as fort Gibraltar, seemed only intent on provisioning himself against a long blockade. But even the best of dinners must end, and coffee came at last. Then one of the Erectheum young men, emboldened by sparkling drinks, asked the prima donna for a song. She laughed, and

shook her head; but the assembled company looked aghast.

"I cannot," said she. "My voice is a bird in one little cage, and my *Impressario* guards the key."

Sir Charles Burgoyne darted a dreadful glance at the offender.

"My dear lady," he said, "pray do not say a word. We all know, or ought to know, that your operatic contract forbids anything of the kind; and even if it were not so, we should not presume to ask so great a favour. It is entirely a mistake — a great mistake — on the part of this young gentleman."

"I — I am very sorry," stammered the unlucky neophyte.

"And I am sorry," said the songstress, good-naturedly. "I should sing for you if I dared."

"Thou must not think of it, *sorellina*," interposed her brother, in his rapid Neapolitan. "Remember the penalty."

"The Signora Graziana must do nothing to offend the manager," said Lord Castletowers, who was familiar with every dialect of the Italian.

"Certainly not," exclaimed Saxon. "Not for the world."

Then, turning to Burgoyne, he whispered — "What is it all about? Why should he be offended because she sang for us?"

"He would have me pay him one hundred pounds," said the prima donna, whose ears were quick.

"A hundred pounds fine, you know," explained Burgoyne. "'Tis in his bond, and the man's a very Shylock with his ducats."

Saxon laughed aloud.

"Is that all?" said he. "Oh, never mind, *bella donna* — I'll pay him his hundred pounds, and welcome."

And so a piano was brought in from another room, and the Graziana sang to them divinely, not one song, but a dozen.

"Perhaps our friend the *Impressario* may not hear of it, after all," said Mr. Greatorex, when the music was over, and they were preparing to return to town.

"Let us all take a solemn oath of secresy," suggested Sir Charles Burgoyne.

But Saxon would not hear of it.

"No, no," said he. "The fine has been fairly forfeited, and shall be fairly paid. Let no man's soul be burthened with a secret on my account. I will send Shylock his cheque to-morrow morning. Ladies, the carriages are at the door."

"I had heard that our Amphitryon did not know the value of money," said Mr. Greatorex, as they went down-stairs, "and now I believe it. Why, this little affair, my lord, take it from first to last, must have been set to the tune of something like five hundred pounds!"

"Well, I suppose it has," replied Castletowers, "including the bracelet."

"A modern Timon — eh?"

"Nay, I hope not. A modern Mæcenas, if you like. It is a name of better augury."

"I fear he dispenses his gold more after the fashion of Timon than of Mæcenas," replied the banker, drily.

"He is a splendid fellow," said the Earl with enthusiasm; "and his lavish generosity is by no means the noblest part of his character."

"But he behaved like a fool about that hundred pounds. Of course, we should all have kept the secret, and . . . ."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Greatorex," interrupted the Earl, somewhat stiffly. "In my opinion, Mr. Trefalden simply behaved like a man of honour."

CHAPTER XIX.

Mr. Trefalden on the Domestic Manners and Customs of Lawyers in general.

"So, my young cousin, you have not yet lost all your primitive virtues," said Mr. Trefalden, as Saxon, heralded by Mr. Keckwitch, made his appearance on the threshold of the lawyer's private room at eight o'clock precisely on Monday evening.

"I hope I have parted from none that I ever possessed," replied Saxon; "but to what particular virtue do you allude?"

"To your punctuality, young man. You are as true to time as on that memorable morning when we breakfasted together at Reichenau, and you tasted Lafitte for the first time. You have become tolerably familiar with the flavour, since then."

"Indeed, I have," replied Saxon, with a smile and a sigh.

"And with a good many other flavours as well, I imagine. Why, let me see, that was on the seventh of March, and here is the beginning of the third week in April — scarcely five weeks ago, Saxon!"

"It seems like five centuries."

"I dare say it does. You have crowded a vast

number of impressions into a very short space of time. But then you are rich in the happy adaptability of youth and can bear the shock of revolution."

"I try to bear it as well as I can," replied Saxon, laughingly. "It isn't very difficult."

"No — the lessons of pleasure and power are soon learnt; and, by the way, the art of dress also. You are quite a swell, Saxon."

The young fellow's face crimsoned.

He could not get over that awkward habit of blushing, do what he would.

"I hope not," he said. "I am what fate and my tailor have made me. Castletowers took me to his own man, and he has done as he liked with me."

"So that, to paraphrase the kingly state, your virtues are your own, and your shortcomings are your tailor's? Nay, don't look uncomfortable. You are well dressed; but not too well dressed — which, to my thinking, is precisely as a gentleman should be."

"I don't wish to be a 'swell,'" said Saxon.

"Nor are you one. And now tell me something about yourself. How do you like this new life?"

"It bewilders me," said Saxon. "It dazzles me. It takes my breath away. I feel as if London were a huge circus, all dust, and roar, and glitter, and I being carried round it, in a great chariot race. It frightens me sometimes, — and yet I enjoy it. There is so much to enjoy!"

"But you thought it a 'dreary' place at first," said Mr. Trefalden, with his quiet smile.

"Because I was a stranger, and knew no one — because the very roar and flow of life along the streets

only made my solitude the heavier. But that's all changed now, thanks to you."

"Thanks to me, Saxon?"

"Of course. Don't I owe that dear fellow Castletowers' acquaintance to you? And if I hadn't known him, how should I have got into the Erectheum? How should I have known Burgoyne, and Greatorex, and Brandon, and Fitz-Hugh, and Dalton, and all the other fellows? And they are so kind to me — it's perfectly incredible how kind they are, and what trouble they take to oblige and please me!"

"Indeed?" said the lawyer, drily.

"Yes, that they do; and I should be worse than ungrateful if I did not like a place where I have so many friends. Then, again, I have so much to do — so much to think of — so much to learn. Why, it would take half a life-time only to see all the picture galleries in London, and study the Etruscan vases in the British Museum!"

Mr. Trefalden could not help laughing.

"You droll boy!" said he. "Do you mean to tell me that you divide your attentions between pretty prima donnas and cinerary urns?"

"I mean that I was in the Etruscan room for three hours this morning, and that we have a tazza at Rotzberg of a kind of which you have not a single specimen in the collection — red, with red *bassi relievi*. What do you say to that?"

"That I would not give five farthings for all the old pottery in Europe."

"Yes, you would, if you once learned to look upon it as history. Now the pottery of Etruria. . . ."

"My dear Saxon," interposed Mr. Trefalden, "as

you are great, be merciful. Spare me the pottery of Etruria, and tell me a little more about yourself. You are learning to ride, are you not?"

"Yes, I can ride pretty well already; and I have a fencing lesson every other morning, and I am learning to drive. But I don't get on quite so well with the whip as with the foils. I have an awkward habit of locking my wheels with other people's, and getting to the wrong side of the road."

"Awkward habits, indeed," said Mr. Trefalden; "especially in Rotten Row."

"And — and I am learning to dance, also," said Saxon, with a shy laugh.

"In short, what with finishing your education, giving suburban dinners, and cultivating the fine arts, your time is tolerably well occupied."

"It is, indeed. I never seem to have a moment to spare."

"Humph! And pray may I ask how much money you have spent during these last three weeks?"

"I haven't the least idea."

"I suspected as much. Kept no accounts, I suppose?"

"None whatever."

Mr. Trefalden smiled significantly, but said nothing.

"I suppose it's very wrong," said Saxon. "I suppose I ought to have put it all down in a book?"

"Undoubtedly."

"But then I know nothing of book-keeping; indeed, I scarcely yet know the real value of money. But if you will tell me what I ought to do, I will try. Gillingwater, can help me, too. *He* knows."

"Gillingwater is your valet, is he not? Where did you hear of him?"

"Greatorex recommended him to me. He is a most invaluable fellow. I don't know what I should do without him."

"And you have a groom, I suppose?"

"I have two grooms."

"Two? My dear boy, what can you want with more than one?"

"I don't know. Burgoyne said I couldn't do with less — but then, you know, I keep five horses."

"Indeed?"

"Yes; one for the cab, two for riding, and two for the mail phaeton."

"And you keep them at livery, of course?"

"Yes; Burgoyne said it was the best way; and that the beasts were sure to be ill-fed if I hired stabling and left it to the men. He knows so much about horses."

"Evidently. It was he who sold you that mare and cab, was it not?"

"To be sure it was; and then I have bought all the rest under his advice. I assure you, cousin William, I don't believe any fellow ever had such friends!"

Mr. Trefalden coughed, and looked at his watch.

"Well," he said, "we must not forget that I have brought you down here to-night, Saxon, for a serious conference. Shall we have some coffee first, to filter the dust from our brains?"

Whereupon, Saxon assenting, the lawyer rang the bell and coffee was brought. In the meanwhile, the young man had made the tour of the room, inspected

the law books on the shelves, examined the door of the safe, peeped out of the window, and ascertained the date of the map hanging over the fireplace. This done, he resumed his chair, and said, with more frankness than politeness: —

"I'd as soon live in a family vault as in this dismal place! Is it possible, cousin William, that you have no other home?"

"The greater part of my life is passed here," replied Mr. Trefalden, sipping his coffee. "I admit that the decorations are not in the highest style of art; but they answer the purpose well enough."

"And you actually live here, day and night, summer and winter?"

"Why no — not altogether. I have a den — a mere den — a few miles from town, in which I hide myself at night, like a beast of prey."

"It is a relief to my mind to know that," said Saxon. "I should like to see your den. Why didn't you let me come to you there to-night?"

"Because you are not fat enough."

"Not fat enough?" repeated Saxon, laughing.

"I admit no man, unless to devour him. Lawyers are ogres, my dear fellow — and that den of mine is paved with the bones of slaughtered clients."

Saying which, Mr. Trefalden put an end to the subject by ringing the bell, and sending for Mr. Keckwitch.

"You may close the office and go, Keckwitch," said he. "I do not want you any more this evening."

Mr. Keckwitch looked at his employer with eyes that had no more speculation in them than if they had been boiled.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he replied with husky placidity, "but perhaps you forget Rogers's case. I am bound to go through the papers to-night."

"Then you can take them home with you. I have private business with this gentleman, and wish to be alone — you understand? Alone."

A pale light flashed into Mr. Keckwitch's eyes — flashed and vanished. But it did not impart an agreeable expression to his countenance.

"And when you have put all straight, and turned off the gas, please to let me know, that I may lock the office door on the inside."

The head clerk retired without a word, followed by the keen eye of his employer.

"If I were to become a rich man to-morrow," said he, with a bitter smile, "the first elegant superfluity in which I should indulge, would be the kicking of that fellow all the way along Chancery Lane. It is a luxury that would be cheap at any price the Court might award."

"If you have so bad an opinion of him, why do you keep him?" asked Saxon.

"For the reason that one often keeps an aching tooth. He is a useful grinder, and helps me to polish off the bones that I was telling you about just now."

Mr. Trefalden then saw his head clerk off the premises, locked the outer door, made up the fire, put the shade on the lamp (he always liked, he said, to spare his eyes), and drew his chair to the table.

CHAPTER XX.

Two and a Half per Cent.

Mr. Keckwitch banished, and the coffee-cups pushed aside, William Trefalden uttered a little preliminary cough, and said,

"Now, Saxon, to business."

Saxon was all attention.

"In the first place," he began, "you have a large fortune in money; and it is highly important that so weighty a sum should be advantageously placed. By advantageously placed, I mean laid out in the purchase of land, lent on mortgage, or otherwise employed in such a manner as to bring you large returns. And I assure you I have not ceased, since your affairs have been in my hands, to make inquiry in every quarter where inquiry was likely to lead to anything useful."

"I'm sure it's very kind of you," murmured Saxon, vaguely.

"The great difficulty," continued Mr. Trefalden, "is the largeness of the sum. It is comparatively easy to dispose of fifty, or a hundred, or even of five hundred thousand pounds; but nobody either wants to borrow, or could give security, for such a sum as four millions. Not that I should wish to see your all placed upon a single venture. Far from it. I would not advise such a step, though the Russian government were the borrower. But neither do I wish to spread your property over too large a surface. It is a course attended with great inconvenience and great expense. Do you quite follow me?"

"Not in the least," said Saxon, to whom the language of the money market was about as intelligible as a cuneiform inscription.

"Well, you understand that your money ought to be invested?"

"I thought it was invested. It's in Drummond's bank."

"Not so. The bulk of your fortune consists of Government stock; but a very considerable sum which I had expected to invest for you before now, and which, if you remember, we sold out of the funds when you first came to London, is temporarily deposited at Drummond's, where at present it brings you no interest. My object, however, is to do with this what I hope to do in time with the whole of your money — namely, invest it safely at a high rate of interest. By these means you will enjoy an ample income, but leave your capital untouched."

"Shall I, indeed?" said Saxon, struggling to conceal a yawn. "That is very curious."

"Not curious at all, if one but understands the first principles of banking. Have you no idea of what interest is?"

"Oh dear yes," replied Saxon, briskly, "I know all about that. Greatorex explained it to me. Interest means two and a half per cent."

Mr. Trefalden shifted the position of his chair, and turned the lamp in such a manner that the light fell more fully on Saxon's face, and left his own in shadow.

"Two and a half per cent!" he repeated. "That was a very limited statement on the part of Mr. Greatorex. Interest may mean anything, from one per cent. up to a hundred, or a hundred thousand. He cannot have offered that assertion as an explanation of general facts. Do you remember the conversation that led to it?"

"Not clearly; but he was talking very much as

you have just been talking, and he said they would give me two and a half per cent. at their bank, if I liked to put my money in it."

"Humph! and your reply?"

"I said you managed everything of that sort for me, and that I would ask you to see to it."

"Meaning that you would ask me to transfer your money from Drummond's to Greatorex's?"

"If you please."

"Then I certainly do not please; and as long as you continue to attach the slightest value to my opinion, you will not place a penny in their hands."

Saxon looked aghast.

"Oh, but — but I promised," said he.

"Precisely what I expected to hear you say. I felt sure you had been trapped into a promise of some kind."

"I can't break my word," said Saxon, resolutely.

Mr. Trefalden shrugged his shoulders.

"I can't let you ruin yourself," he replied. "Greatorex and Greatorex are on the verge of bankruptcy; and I have private information which leads me to believe they must stop payment before the week is out."

The young man stared at him in silence. He neither knew what to say, nor what to think.

"And now," said his cousin, "tell me all that took place, as nearly as you can remember it. First of all, I suppose, Mr. Laurence Greatorex kindly volunteered to explain to you the system under which money can be made to produce interest; and, having shown you how it was part of the business of a banker to pay interest on deposits, he proposed to take your money, and allow you two and a half per cent?"

Saxon nodded.

"You referred the proposition to me, and Mr. Greatorex was not best pleased to find that you relied so much upon my judgment."

"How do you know that?" exclaimed Saxon.

"He then enlarged on the dangers of high interest, and the troublesome nature of investments in land; pointed out the advantages of the deposit system; and ended by extracting your promise for . . . how much?"

"Who *can* have told you all this?"

"Tell me first whether I am correct?"

"Word for word."

Mr. Trefalden leaned back in his chair and laughed — a little soft, satisfied laugh, like an audible smile.

"I have a familiar demon, Saxon," said he. "His name is Experience; and he tells me a great many more things than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But you have not yet answered my first question — how much?"

"He said it was a very bad plan to lock up one's money — 'lock up' was the phrase, I am sure — and that I should find it so convenient to be able to draw mine out whenever I chose. And then . . . ."

"And then you agreed with him, of course. Go on."

"And then he said he supposed I would not mind [illegible] to the extent of five hundred thousand with their [illegible] . . . ."

"Five hundred thousand! Had he the incredible [illegible] to ask you for five hundred thousand?"

"Cousin William, it seemed to me, from [illegible] which he put it, that Mr. Greatorex had only [illegible] view."

"[illegible]!"

"He said that it could make no difference to them; and that one person's thousands were no more to them, in the way of business, than another's."

"And you believed him?"

"Of course I believed him."

"And promised him the five hundred thousand?"

"Yes."

"Then it's a promise that will have to be broken, young man, that is all. Nay, don't look so unhappy. I will take all the burden from your shoulders. A lawyer can do these things easily enough, and offend no one. Besides, no man is bound to fling his money away with his eyes open. If you were to pay in that five hundred thousand pounds to-morrow morning, it would all be in the pockets of Sir Samuel's creditors before night. It would help the firm to stave off the evil day, and you would most likely get your two and a half per cent.; but I *know* that you would never see one farthing of the principal again — and Laurence Greatorex knows that I know it."

"But — but I have not told you quite all yet," stammered Saxon, whose face had been getting graver and graver with every word that Mr. Trefalden uttered. "I have given him a cheque for half."

It was well for Mr. Trefalden that the shade fell on him where he sat, and concealed the storm that swept across his features at this announcement. It came and went like a swift shadow; but, practised master of himself as he was, he could no more have controlled the expression of his face at that moment than he could have controlled a thunder-cloud up in the heavens.

"You have given Mr. Greatorex a c

hundred and fifty thousand pounds?" he said, after a momentary pause.

"I know it was very wrong — I know I ought to have consulted you first!" exclaimed Saxon, quite overwhelmed by the magnitude of his error.

"Never mind that at present," replied the lawyer, coldly. "The mischief is done, and we have only to try if any of the money is recoverable. When did you give it to him?"

"Just now — after dinner."

"To-day? After three o'clock?"

"Not an hour ago. We met at the club; he asked me to dine with him . . . ."

"And when you told him you were to see me this evening, he got you to sign the cheque out of hand!" interposed Mr. Trefalden, eagerly. "Clever — very clever; but not quite clever enough, for all that!"

Saying which, the lawyer seized paper and pen, and began writing rapidly. Having scribbled three or four lines, he pushed them across the table, and said: —

"Read that, and sign it."

It was an order upon the Drummond's firm to refuse payment of all cheques signed by Mr. Saxon Trefalden, until further notice.

"But suppose," said Saxon, "that he has cashed it already?"

"He can't cash it, you foolish boy, till the bank opens to-morrow morning; and by that time it will be too late. I shall instantly take a cab, and go down with this paper to the private house of the chief cashier; and, to make assurance doubly sure, Keckwitch shall be at the bank to-morrow morning when the doors

open. Lucky for you, my fine fellow, that you committed this little folly after three o'clock in the day!"

Saxon signed the paper somewhat reluctantly, and Mr. Trefalden put it into his pocket-book.

"Our business conference must wait," said he, "till this affair is settled. Shall you be at home and alone to-morrow at twelve, if I come up for an hour's talk?"

"I will be at home and alone, of course," replied Saxon; "but I am going down into Surrey by the three o'clock express."

"To Castletowers'?"

"Yes — for a week or ten days."

Mr. Trefalden hesitated.

"What I have to say to you must be said quietly and thoroughly," observed he, musingly. "And if you are very stupid indeed, and want a great deal of explanation . . . ."

"Which is quite certain!" interrupted Saxon, laughing.

"Which I am afraid is quite certain — an hour will not be enough."

"Will you come at eleven?"

Mr. Trefalden took up a manuscript book, and examined one or two consecutive pages before replying.

"I will not come at all," he said, closing it decisively, and taking up his hat. "I will run down to you at Castletowers instead, on Thursday morning. The entries in my engagement-book show nothing of great importance for that day, and I know the Earl will be pleased to receive me. I believe I can even

manage to dine there, and return by the last train at ten."

"That *is* good!" exclaimed Saxon, heartily; "and a day out of town will invigorate you for a month."

So it was settled; and Mr. Trefalden turned off the last of the gas, and let his cousin out in the dark.

"I will send you a line in the morning just to say that all's well at Drummond's," said the lawyer, as they shook hands in the street below; "but you must give me your word of honour to sign no more cheques till after Wednesday; and, above all, never again to transact any important business without first taking my advice."

"Indeed, Cousin William, I never will," replied Saxon, penitently.

"And if your disinterested friend comes to you in his wrath to-morrow morning, refer him to me. My nerves are strong, and I can bear any amount of vituperation."

"I suppose he will be very much annoyed," said Saxon.

"Annoyed? He will go raging up and down, seeking whom he may devour. But what does that matter? His anger will not fall upon you, but upon your legal adviser. And I am not afraid that he will eat me. Lawyers are indigestible."

Whereupon they again shook hands, and went their separate ways; Mr. Trefalden's way being to Bayswater, where dwelt the chief cashier in the bosom of his family, and Saxon's to his stall at the opera.

CHAPTER XXI.

Mr. Greatorex with the Polish Off.

"MR. GREATOREX wishes to know, sir, if you can give him five minutes' private conversation."

It was not quite a quarter past ten, and Saxon, who had taken a riding lesson before breakfast, was loitering over a book, with the breakfast service still upon the table. He laid the volume hastily down, and desired that Mr. Greatorex might be shown in. He was no moral coward; but he felt decidedly uncomfortable when he heard the quick ring of the banker's high-heeled boots on the polished floor of the antechamber.

Mr. Greatorex came in, shut the door in Gillingwater's face, flung a crumpled slip of paper on the table, and said in a voice that quivered with suppressed passion: —

"You have thought fit, Mr. Trefalden, to stop the payment of this cheque. May I inquire with what motive?"

He kept his hat on, and the face beneath it was at a white heat, even to the lips.

"I am really very sorry, Greatorex," said Saxon, nervously; "but I ought never to have given it to you. My cousin manages all my affairs, and I had no business to interfere with his arrangements. He objects to your offer, and — and I am obliged to decline it. But why won't you shake hands with me?"

Mr. Greatorex put his hands behind his back.

"You have insulted me," he said, "and . . . ."

"Not intentionally!" interrupted Saxon. "Upon my honour, not intentionally."

The banker heard him with a bitter smile.

"Pshaw!" he said, scornfully. "We all know what intentions are worth. Yours were certainly not very friendly when you exposed me just now to the grins and sneers of every petty clerk in Drummond's office. Pray did it not occur to you that the position might be the reverse of agreeable; or that it might affect my credit somewhat unpleasantly among my brother bankers?"

"I feared, indeed, that I might be so unfortunate as to inconvenience you, Mr. Greatorex," replied Saxon, with dignity; "and I tell you again that I am sorry for it. But I had no thought of insulting you."

"Inconvenience!" echoed Greatorex, fiercely. "Good God, man, you have ruined me!"

"Ruined you?"

"Ay, ruined me — me and mine — my father, who is an old man of sixty-eight — my sisters, who are both unmarried. Curse you! how do you like that?"

And with this he flung himself into a chair, and sat drumming on the table with his clenched hands.

Saxon was inexpressibly shocked.

"You must explain this to me," he faltered. "I do not understand — indeed I do not!"

Greatorex glared up at him vindictively, but made no reply.

"I would not willingly injure my worst enemy, if I had one," continued the young fellow, with tears in his voice, if not in his eyes; much less one whom I have eaten and drank with, and looked upon as my

friend. What do you mean when you say that I have ruined you?"

"Simply that we shall be in the Gazette to-morrow. You understand that, I suppose?"

The coarse nature of the man had all come to the surface under this powerful test, and he took no pains to hide it. He was literally drunk with rage. Saxon, however, saw his condition, and, ignorant as he was of human nature, by some fine instinct, understood and pitied it.

"But why need the withdrawal of this sum work you so much evil?" he said, gently. "You are surely no worse off without it to-day than you were yesterday."

"This is why — since you *will* have it! We wanted money — money and time — for we have met with some ugly losses that we didn't choose to tell the world about; and we knew we could pull through, if we had the chance."

"Well?"

"Well, there are three or four firms that have heavy claims upon us, and are getting troublesome. Relying on your cheque, I wrote to them last night, and desired them to draw upon us any time after one o'clock to-day. They will draw — and the bank will stop payment."

Saxon sprang to his feet, and seized the cheque, which was still lying where the banker had thrown it.

"No, no," he cried, "not through my act, Greatorex — Heaven forbid! How much do you want, to meet these claims to-day?"

"There's one of twenty-two thousand, six hundred and forty-five pounds," said the other, still sullenly,

but in an altered tone. "That's the heaviest. Another of eighteen thousand, two hundred and three fifteen; one of ten thousand; and one of seven thousand, nine hundred and eleven. Fifty-eight thousand, seven hundred and fifty-nine pounds fifteen shillings, in all."

Saxon flew to the bell, and rang it furiously.

"A Hansom from the stand, Gillingwater," said he, "and choose the best horse among them." Then, snatching up his hat — "Greatorex," he added, "I would drive you to Drummond's this instant, if I could; but I won't break my word. I gave William my solemn promise last night to do nothing without consulting him, and I must go down to Chancery Lane first. But you shall have the money long enough before one — nay, don't shake your head. It still wants twenty minutes to eleven, and I'll be back in three quarters of an hour!"

"Pooh!" said the banker, impatiently. "I dare say you mean it; but he won't let you do it. I know him."

Saxon's eyes flashed.

"Then you don't know *me*," said he. "The money is my own, and I swear you shall have it. How much do you say it is?"

"Fifty-eight thousand, seven hundred and . . ."

"Then fifty-nine thousand will do, and that's easier to remember. Come, old fellow, jump into my cab with me. I can take you as far as Chancery Lane, and you'll see me back in Lombard Street before one o'clock."

CHAPTER XXII.

Telemachus shows that he has a Will of his Own.

UNLIKE the great ocean which, however racked by hurricane and storm, sleeps in eternal calm but a little way beneath the tossing waves, Mr. Trefalden kept all his tempests down below, and presented to the world a surface of unvarying equanimity. No man ever knew what went on under that "glassy cool" exterior. Cyclones might rage in the far depths of his nature, and those who were looking in his face saw no ripple, heard no echo, of the strife within. It was just thus when Saxon burst in upon him at about eleven o'clock that Tuesday morning, brimful of compassion for the perplexities of the house of Greatorex, and burning to relieve them at the moderate cost of fifty-nine thousand pounds sterling.

Mr. Trefalden was furious; but he smiled, nevertheless, and heard Saxon quite patiently from beginning to end of his story.

"But this is pure nonsense and Quixotism," said he, when the young man came to a pause for want of breath. "What's Greatorex to you, or you to Greatorex? Why should you recklessly sacrifice a sum which is in itself a handsome fortune, to oblige a man who has no claim whatever on your sympathies, or your purse?"

"I can't let him be ruined!" cried Saxon, impetuously.

"Why not? He would not have hesitated to ruin you. He would have swept your whole property into his rotten bank, and have allowed you one per cent. less than the current rate of interest."

"I can't tell how that may be," said Saxon; "but I gave him my cheque, and he acted on the faith of it. I must not let him suffer."

"But he would have suffered, sooner or later. Did I not tell you last night that the Greatorexes were on the verge of bankruptcy, and that I believed they must stop payment before the week was out? Don't you remember that?"

"Yes — I remember it."

"Then you must surely see that your cheque can be in no sense the cause of their ruin? At the worst, it but hastens the event by a few days."

"I see that I have no right, and, Heaven knows! no wish to hasten it by a single hour."

"But, my dear Saxon . . ."

"But, my dear cousin William, Laurence Greatorex has an old father, and two sisters, and he and I have been on terms of good fellowship together for this month past, and I'm determined to stand by him."

"Oh, if you are determined, Saxon, that puts an end to the matter," said Mr. Trefalden, coldly. "But in this case, why consult me at all?"

"I didn't come to consult you, cousin; but I had given you my word not to give away any more money

till after Thursday, and I felt bound to let you know what I was about to do."

Mr. Trefalden looked very grave.

"I confess that I am disappointed," he said. "I had hoped to find my opinion more valued by you, Saxon. I had also hoped that you would look upon me as something more than your lawyer — as your friend, adviser, guide."

"Why, so I do!" cried the young man, eagerly.

"Pardon me; I do not think so."

"Then you do me injustice; for I put a priceless value on your opinion and your friendship."

"Your present wilfulness disproves your words, Saxon," said his cousin.

"I know it does; but then I also know that I am acting upon impulse, and not according to the laws of worldly wisdom. I have no doubt that you are perfectly right, and that I am utterly wrong — but still I cannot be happy if I do not, for once, indulge my folly."

Seeing that it was useless to push the argument further, Mr. Trefalden smiled in his pleasantest manner.

"I do think," said he, "that you are the most foolish fellow in the world. If I don't make haste to tie your money up, you will ruin yourself, rich as you are!"

"But what's the use of being rich if I may not enjoy my wealth in my own way?" laughed Saxon, delighted to have carried his point.

"Your way is a very irrational way," replied the lawyer, taking a slip of paper from his desk and writ-

ing upon it in a clear engrossing hand; "almost as irrational as that of the poor sailors who make sandwiches of their bank notes and bread-and-butter. But I suppose I must forgive you for this once; and, after all, the loss of fifty-nine thousand is better than the loss of a quarter of a million. There, put that in your purse, and see that your devoted friend signs it on the blank line at the bottom."

"What is it?"

"A promissory note for the money. He will perhaps offer you an ordinary receipt on the part of the firm; but this, if signed in the name of the firm, will answer the purpose much better. What — going already?"

Saxon explained that Greatorex wanted the cash before one o'clock.

"You have removed the 'stop' from Drummond's, I suppose?"

"Not yet. I will call there as I go home."

"And Mr. Greatorex has given you back your first cheque?"

"I don't know. I think we left it on the breakfast-table."

Mr. Trefalden bit his lip.

"Upon my soul, Saxon," he said, "you deserve to be fleeced by every sharper who can get his hand within reach of a feather of you! Go home and find that cheque before you dream of removing your injunction; and if you can't find it, give them a note of the number and amount, in case of its being presented for payment."

Saxon laughed, and promised obedience; but declared there was no danger.

"And you will still keep your promise of signing away no more money without consulting me?"

"Implicitly."

"Then good-by till Thursday."

Saxon sprang down the stairs whistling a shrill Swiss air, and was gone in a moment; and Mr. Trefalden's face, as he listened, grew dark, and hard, and cold, as if it were changing into granite.

"Fool!" he muttered, fiercely. "As eager to ruin himself as are others to ruin him! I should be mad to hold back now. I have waited, and watched, and let him go his own way long enough; but my turn has come at last, and I mean to have it."

"If you please, sir," said Mr. Keckwitch, putting his head suddenly in at the door, "Mr. Behrens called about ten minutes ago, and said he'd come again at two."

"Very well," replied the lawyer, wearily. "Bring me Mr. Behrens's deed box."

And then he sat for a long time with the box unopened before him, and his head resting on his hands.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Hole in William Trefalden's Armour.

THE man who has a purpose to achieve, or a secret to hide, should never make an enemy. It is his obvious policy to shun that disaster as sedulously as an expectant bridegroom shuns the conscription, a débutante the small-pox, or a railway director the possible horrors

of an excursion train. But the wisest cannot always be wise; and the wariest are apt now and then to omit some little precaution whereby the dread catastrophe against which they have so long been building up their defences, might have been averted after all. Thetis, when she dipped Achilles in the seven-fold river, forgot the heel by which she held him, and left it vulnerable for the fatal arrow. Imperial Cæsar put aside for future reading the paper that would have saved him from assassination. Henri Quatre — he of the valiant heart, to whom nothing seemed impossible — neglected alike his own presentiments, and the prayers of those who loved him, when he went forth to his doom in the Rue de la Ferronière. These things are common. We read of them in the records of almost every famous crime, or sudden catastrophe. The "complete steel" has some weak point of junction which the foeman's blade finds out; the conspirator drops a paper, and the plot which was to subvert a dynasty recoils on the heads of the plotters; the cleverest alibi breaks down in some minute particular, which no one had the wit to foresee. A little more prudence was alone needed to ensure quite opposite results — a little better closing of the rivets of the gorget, or the seams of the pocket, or the incidents of the story; but the precaution that would have made all safe, was precisely that precaution which happened to be neglected.

William Trefalden had both a purpose to achieve, and a secret to hide, and he was not insensible to the inconveniences that might arise from the ill-will of his fellow men; but he had made two enemies, and those two enemies were the two greatest errors of his life. He had never attempted to be what is called "a popular

man." He had none of that apparent frankness and buoyancy of manner necessary to the part; but he especially desired to be well spoken of. He *was* well spoken of, and had acquired that sort of reputation which is, above all others, the most valuable to a professional man — a reputation for sagacity, and prosperity; and prosperity, be it remembered, is the seal of merit. But, having achieved so much, and being on the high road to certain other achievements, the nature of which were as yet known only to himself, he ought to have abstained at any cost from awaking the enmity of two such men as Abel Keckwitch and Laurence Greatorex. It would have been better for him if he had denied himself the satisfaction of punishing his head clerk that memorable evening in March, and been content only to dodge him in the shade of the doorway. It would have been better if, knowing himself to be the destined Jason, he had even suffered Laurence Greatorex to carry off that noble slice from the Golden Fleece, which was represented by Saxon's first cheque. But he had followed neither of these prudent courses. He despised the clerk, he was irritated against the banker, and he never even asked himself how they were disposed towards him in return. They both hated him; but had he known this, it is probable that he would have been equally indifferent to the fact. Not to know it — not even to have given it a thought, one way or the other — was a great oversight; and that oversight was the one hole in William Trefalden's armour.

Mr. Abel Keckwitch was a very respectable man. He lodged in the house of a gaunt widow, who lived in a small back street at Pentonville; and his windows commanded a thriving churchyard. He paid his rent

with scrupulous regularity; he went to church every Sunday morning; he took in the Weekly Observer; he kept a cat; and he played the violoncello. He had done all these things for the last thirty years, and he did them advisedly; for Mr. Keckwitch was of a methodical temperament, and loved to carry on the unprofessional half of his existence in a groove of the strictest routine. Having started in life with the determination of being eminently respectable, he had modelled himself after his own matter-of-fact ideal, and cut his tastes according to his judgment. His cat and his violoncello were cases in point. He would have preferred a dog; but he made choice of the cat, because puss looked more domestic, and reflected the quiet habits of her master. In like manner Mr. Keckwitch entertained a secret leaning towards the concertina; but he yielded this point in favour of the superior respectability of the violoncello. And it cannot be denied that Mr. Keckwitch was right. A more respectable possession than a violoncello for a single man, can hardly be conceived. It is the very antithesis to all that is light and frivolous. It leads to no conviviality. It neither inclines its owner to quadrille parties, like the cornet-à-pistons, nor to cold gin-and-water, like the flute; and it lends itself to amateur psalmody after a manner unequalled in dreariness by any other instrument. It was Mr. Keckwitch's custom to practise for an hour every evening after tea; and in the summer he did it with the windows open, which afflicted the neighbourhood with a universal melancholy. At these times his landlady would shed tears for her departed husband, and declare that "it was beautiful, and she felt all the better for it;" and the photographer

next door, who was a low-spirited young man, and read Byron, would shut himself up in his dark room, and indulge in thoughts of suicide.

Such was the placid and irreproachable tenor of Mr. Abel Keckwitch's home life. It suited his temperament, and it gratified his ambition. He knew that he inspired the lodging-house bosom with confidence, and the parochial authorities with esteem. The pew-opener curtsied to him, and the churchwardens nodded to him affably in the street. In short, Pentonville regarded him as a thoroughly respectable man.

Scarcely less methodical was the other — the professional — half of this respectable man's career. He was punctuality itself, and hung his hat up in William Trefalden's office every morning at nine, with as much exactitude as the clock announced the hour. At one, he repaired to an eating-house in High Holborn, where he had dined at the same cost, and from the same dishes, for the last two-and-twenty years. Don Quixote's diet before he took to knight-errantry was not more monotonous; but instead of the "pigeon extraordinary on Sundays," Mr. Keckwitch dined on that day at his landlady's table, and stipulated for pudding. At two, he resumed his seat at the office desk; and, when there was no particular pressure of work, went home to his cat and his violoncello at half-past six. At certain seasons, however, Mr. Keckwitch and his fellow clerks were almost habitually detained for an hour, or an an hour and a half over-time, and thereby grew the richer; for William Trefalden was a prosperous man, and paid his labourers fairly.

So sober, so steady, so plodding was the head clerk's daily round of occupation. He fattened upon it,

and grew asthmatic as the years went by. No one would have dreamed, to look into his dull eyes and stolid face, that he could be other than the veriest machine that ever drove a quill; but he was nothing of the kind. He was an invaluable clerk; and William Trefalden knew his worth precisely. His head was as clear as his voice was husky; his memory was prodigious, and for all merely technical purposes, he was as good a lawyer as Trefalden himself. He entertained certain views, however, with regard to his own field of action, which by no means accorded with those of his employer. He liked to know everything; and he conceived that it was his right, as Mr. Trefalden's head clerk, to establish a general supervision of the whole of that gentleman's professional and private affairs. He also deemed it to be in some sort his duty to find out that which was withheld from him, and regarded every reservation as a personal affront. That Mr. Trefalden should keep certain papers for his own reading; should answer certain letters with his own hand; and should sometimes remain in his private room for long hours after he and the others were dismissed, preparing unknown documents, and even holding conferences with strangers upon subjects that never filtered through to the outer office, were offences which it was not in Mr. Keckwitch's nature to forgive. Nor were these all the wrongs of which he had to complain. It was William Trefalden's pleasure to keep his private life and his private affairs strictly to himself. No man knew whether he was married or single. No man knew how or where he lived. His practice was large and increasing, and the proceeds thereof were highly lucrative. Mr. Keckwitch had calculated them many a time, and

could give a shrewd guess at the amount of his master's annual income. But what did he do with this money? How did he invest it? Did he invest it at all? Was it lent out at usurious interest, in quarters not to be named indiscreetly? Or launched in speculations that would not bear the light of day? Or gambled away at the tables of some secret hell, in the purlieus of the Haymarket or Leicester Square? Or was the lawyer a mere vulgar miser, after all, hoarding his good gold in the cracks and crevices of some ruinous old house, the address of which he guarded as jealously as if it were the key to his wealth?

Here was the mystery of mysteries; here was the ark of William Trefalden's secret; here was the one thing which Abel Keckwitch's whole soul was bent on discovering.

Possessed by that innate curiosity which acted as the leaven to his phlegmatic temperament, the head clerk had for years pondered over this mystery; lain in wait for it; scented round it from all sides; and, in a certain dogged way, resented it. But since that evening of the second of March, he had fixed upon it with a vindictive tenacity as deadly as the coil of the boa. He saw, or believed he saw, in this thing, a weapon wherewith to chastise the man who had dared to find him out, and called him spy; and upon this one object he concentrated the whole force of his sluggish but powerful will. For Abel Keckwitch was a hater after Byron's own heart, and loved to nurse his wrath, and brood upon it, and keep it warm. He never passed that doorway in Chancery Lane without rehearsing the whole scene in his mind. He remembered every insulting word that William Trefalden had hurled at

him in those three or four moments. He still felt the iron knuckles — the burning sense of rage and humiliation; and these things rankled day by day in the respectable bosom of Abel Keckwitch, and were each day farther and farther from being forgiven and forgotten.

The secret, however, remained as dark as ever. He had fancied once or twice of late that he was on the verge of some discovery; but he had each time found himself misled by his suspicions, and as far off as ever from the goal.

Hope deferred, and wrath long cherished, began at length to tell upon Mr. Keckwitch's health and spirits. He became morose and abstracted. He gave up practising the violoncello. He lost his appetite for the diurnal meats of High Holborn, and his relish for the leaders that he was wont to devour with his cheese; and he forgot to take notice of his cat. His landlady and his fellow-clerks saw and marvelled at the change; and the soul of the one-eyed waiter who received Mr. Keckwitch's daily obolus, was perplexed within him; but none dared to question him. They observed him from afar off, as the Greeks looked upon Achilles sitting sullenly beside his ships, and canvassed his mood "with bated breath and whispering humbleness."

This went on for weeks; and then, all at once, the tide turned, and Mr. Keckwitch became himself again. An idea had occurred to him — a bright idea, by the light of which he distinctly saw the path to success opening out before him. He only wondered that he had not thought of it sooner.

CHAPTER XXIV.

At the Waterloo-Bridge Station.

SAXON TREFALDEN was in buoyant spirits that afternoon as he wandered to and fro among the intricate platforms of the Waterloo-Bridge station, and watched the coming and going of the trains. He had plenty of time; for he was a very inexperienced traveller, and, in his anxiety to be punctual, had come half an hour too soon. But his mind was full of pleasant thoughts, and he enjoyed the life and bustle of the place with as much zest as if the whole scene were a comedy played for his amusement.

He was very happy. He thought, as he went strolling up and down, that he had scarcely ever felt so happy in his life.

In the first place, he had that day received a letter from Pastor Martin — a long, loving, pious, letter, filled with sweet home news, and benevolent projects about good things to be done in the valley of Domleschg. The remittance which he had dispatched the very day after he drew his first cheque, had been distributed among the poor of the neighbouring parishes: the organ that he had sent out a fortnight since had arrived, and the workmen were busy with it daily: the farm buildings at Rotzberg were being repaired, and the three meadows down by the river-side, that had been so long for sale, were now bought in Saxon's name, and added to the little demesne. The pigeons, too, had a new pigeon house; and the spotted cow had calved; and the thrushes that built last year in the

great laurel down at the end of the garden, had again made their nest in the branches of the same tree. These were trifles; but to Saxon, who loved his far away home, his native valley, and all the surroundings of his boyhood, with the passionate enthusiasm of a mountaineer, they were trifles infinitely precious and delightful. And besides all this, the letter ended with a tender blessing that had rested upon his heart ever since he read it, and seemed to hallow all the sunshine of the April day.

Then, in the second place, he had that morning enjoyed the supreme luxury of doing good. William Trefalden had, it is true, affirmed that the hours of Greatorex and Greatorex were numbered, and that Saxon's fifty-nine thousands could only interpose a brief delay between the bankers and their ruin; but Laurence Greatorex, with the crisp bank-notes in his hand, had assured him that this sum, by renewing their credit and tiding them over the present emergency, was certain salvation to the firm. Taking it on the whole, this matter of the cheque had been sufficiently disagreeable. It had shown the banker's disposition from an unfavourable point of view, and to withdraw from even a part of his rash promise had been a source of humiliation to Saxon. Perhaps, too, the young man could not help liking his friend somewhat less than before; and this is at all times a painful feeling. Himself one of nature's own gentlemen, he shrunk instinctively from all that was coarse and mercenary; and he could not shut his eyes to the fact that Greatorex had shown himself to be both. However, it had ended pleasantly. Saxon had saved his friend, and the banker had not only overwhelmed him

with professions of gratitude, but given him a proper acknowledgment for the money, so that William Trefalden's stamped receipt (which Saxon knew he should never have produced, though he had lost every penny by the omission) was happily not needed after all.

And in the third place, he was going into the country for a week or ten days. That was the last and best of all! After six weeks of feverish London life — six long, dazzling, breathless, wonderful weeks — he felt his heart leap at the thought of the free, fresh air, and open sky. He longed to be up and out again at grey dawn, with a gun on his shoulder and a dog at his heels. He longed to feel the turf under his feet; and, above all, to practise the art of horsemanship in some more favourable locality than the yard of the riding school, or the crowded manège of Rotten Row. To this end, he had a couple of thoroughbreds and a groom with him, and had just seen the animals safely disposed of in a horse-box, ready to join the train as soon as it was backed into the station.

So Saxon was in great spirits, and went round and about, looking at the book stalls and the hurrying passengers, and thinking what a charming thing it was to have youth, riches, friends, and all the world of books and art before one! There were, in truth, a great many half-formed projects floating about his brain just now — vague pictures of a yachting tour in the Mediterranean; visions of Rome, and Naples, and the isles of Greece; glimpses of the Nile, and the Pyramids, and even of the white domes of Jerusalem. For some of these schemes Lord Castletowers was

answerable, but, let the foreground be what it might, the familiar snow peaks of the Rhætian Alps closed in the distance of every wondrous landscape that Saxon's vivid imagination bodied forth. He had no thought of wandering into Italy without first re-visiting the valley of Domleschg; and still less did he ever dream of making his permanent home away from that still, primitive, untrodden place. But he had projects about that also, and meant some day to build a beautiful commodious château (not so large, but much more beautiful than the Count Planta's), and to rebuild the church, and throw a new bridge over the Rhine, and erect model cottages, and make everyone happy around him.

"Well, what is it?" said an authoritative voice. "Anything the matter?"

Saxon was looking at the red and gold backs of a long row of Traveller's Guides, on a bookstand close by, and the voice broke in abruptly on the pleasant reverie which their titles had suggested. He turned, and saw a lady, a railway guard, and a burly-looking official with a pen behind his ear, standing at the door of an empty second-class carriage of the up-train which had discharged its freight of passengers three or four minutes ago.

The guard touched his cap.

"Lady's lost her ticket, sir," he replied, with a knowing twinkle of the eye.

"I know I had it when the train stopped at Weybridge," said the lady. "I took it out from my purse, because I thought the guard was going to ask to see it."

Her voice trembled as she said this, stoop-

ing forward into the carriage all the while, in search of the missing ticket.

The burly official drew his hand across his mouth, and coughed doubtfully.

"Where did you take it from, miss?" he asked.

"From Sedgebrook station."

The name came familiarly to Saxon's ear, for it happened that Sedgebrook was precisely the point to which Lord Castletowers had directed him to take his own ticket.

"Humph! Well, Salter, I suppose you've searched the carriage thoroughly?"

"Quite thoroughly, sir," replied the guard.

The official went through the form of peering into it himself, and said:

"Then, miss, I'm afraid there's no help for it."

"Shall I have to pay the fare a second time?" asked the lady, nervously.

"You'll have to pay it from Exeter — the point where the train started from."

"From Exeter? But I only came from Sedgebrook!"

"Can't help that, miss. Those are our regulations. Any passenger unable to produce his ticket on alighting must pay his full fare from the point of departure. This train comes from Exeter, and from Exeter you must pay. There hangs our table of by-laws. You can see it for yourself."

Her face was turned towards Saxon now, as she stood by the carriage door, looking from the one man to the other. It was a very young face, quite child-like in its appealing timidity, and as pale as a lily.

"Thank you," she said, hurriedly, "I don't want

to see it. I am quite satisfied with what you say. How much will it be?"

"One pound five."

The pale face became scarlet, and the childlike eyes filled with sudden tears.

"Oh, dear!" she said, tremulously, "what shall I do? I have not nearly so much money as that!"

Saxon had seen that she was poorly dressed, and he knew, as well as if he had looked into it, that her slender purse could ill spare even the paltry three shillings and sixpence from Sedgebrook to London. His hand had been in his waistcoat pocket half-a-dozen times already, and was only withdrawn empty because he felt that it would be a simple impertinence to interpose. But now he could bear it no longer.

"May I be permitted, madam," he said, bowing to the young girl as profoundly as if she were a princess of the blood royal, "to arrange this matter for you?"

And he slipped her fare into the hand of the guard.

The blush deepened painfully upon her cheek.

"I — I thank you, sir," she faltered. "I thank you very much. Will you be good enough to give me your card, that I may know where to send the money?"

Saxon felt in his pockets, looked in his purse, and found that he had not the vestige of a card about him. At this moment a bell rang on the opposite platform, and a porter whom he had entrusted with his railway rug and the task of securing him a seat, came running breathlessly up.

"Train's just a going, sir," said he. "You've not a minute to lose."

So Saxon bowed again, stammered something about being "very sorry," and vanished from the scene.

Just as he had taken his seat, however, and the train had begun to move, the guard appeared at the window, tossed in a card, said something which was lost in the shrill shriek of the driver's whistle, and dropped out of sight.

Saxon picked up the card, which was rather small for a lady's use, and read:

Miss Rivière,

Photographic colourist,

6, Brudenell Terrace, Camberwell.

"Poor little thing!" he said to himself, with a pitying smile, "does she suppose that I will send to her for the trumpery sovereign!"

And then he was about to throw it out of the window; but checked himself, looked at it again, and put it in his waistcoat pocket instead.

"She was very pretty," thought he; "and her voice was very sweet. How glad I am that I had no card about me!"

CHAPTER XXV.

Saxon renews his Acquaintance with the Colonnas.

Saxon found the Earl waiting for him at the Sedgebrook station, with a plain phaeton, and a long-limbed, bony, black mare, that looked somewhat viciously askance at the new-comer, and would evidently not have consented to stand still for a moment, were it not for the groom at her head.

"That's right, Trefalden," said Castletowers, as Saxon emerged from the station with his gun-case in his hand, and his rug over his shoulder. "Your train's a quarter after time, and the mare has been giving herself as many airs as a spoiled beauty. Jump up, my dear fellow, and let me tell you how glad I am to see you. Brought any horses?"

"Yes, two — since you insisted that I should do so. Here they come."

The Earl turned and glanced at the thoroughbreds, which were now being led down in a travelling costume that left nothing of them visible save their hoofs and their eyes.

"They're as welcome as yourself — if that's not a bad compliment," said he. "I've sent a light cart for your luggage, and my man shall follow with your groom, to show him the way. It's only a couple of miles to the park gates. Anything else?"

There was nothing else; so the groom stepped back, and the mare shook her ears, and went away down the road as if she [illegible]en shot from a catapult.

"I am delighted you've brought those horses, Trefalden," said the Earl, as they flew along between the green hedgerows of the pleasant country road; "for I have really nothing fit to mount you upon. This mare's a demon when her temper is up, and my mother's carriage horses are as fat and lazy as a pair of aldermen. In fact, I have given over the only tolerable beast in the stables for Miss Colonna's sole use and benefit, as long as she remains at Castletowers."

"Miss Colonna?" echoed Saxon.

"A lady who is visiting us," replied the Earl, explanatorily. "You have heard of her father, no doubt — Giulio Colonna, the great Italian patriot? He is staying with us also."

"Yes, I have heard of him," said Saxon, who had turned very red, and began to wish himself back again in London.

"He is my mother's oldest friend," continued Castletowers, "and mine too. I don't know what you may have heard of him — few public characters have ever had so many enemies, or so many friends — but you must be prepared to like him, Trefalden, for my sake. You may not take to him at first. He is eccentric, absent, somewhat cold; but a man of antique virtue — a man whose grand simplicity of soul is as much out of place in the nineteenth century as Cincinnatus himself would be out of place in a modern drawing-room."

Saxon thought of the twenty francs that Signor Colonna had offered him at Reichenau, and did not kindle at this description, as his friend had anticipated.

"I have heard nothing to his disadvantage," he

said, with some constraint. "Is Major Vaughan still with you?"

"Yes, and Burgoyne comes down to-morrow. We intend to be quite gay while you are all here."

"What do you mean by quite gay?"

"Well, my mother gives a dinner party to-morrow, and an evening party on Saturday; and on Thursday the last meet of the season will be held in our grounds. Then on Monday, the officers of the Forty-second, now quartered at Guildford, give a great ball, to which our guests are, of course, invited — and so runs the programme, with little variation. It is monotonous; but what can one do at a distance of thirty miles from London?"

"Lead the happiest life in the world, I should think," replied Saxon.

"It is a question of taste and means," said the Earl, with a sigh. "A *motif* of field sports, set to an everlasting *ritornella* of dining and dancing, dancing and dining — that is life in an English country house. For myself, I prefer the harsher music of a military band."

"Do you mean that you wish to go into the army?"

"I mean that I should like to be a soldier, if my sword and my sympathies could go together; but that they never can, so it's of no use to think about it. Do you see that belt of pines straight ahead, and the green slope beyond, sprinkled over with elms? That's Castle-towers. The house will come into sight directly, at the turn of the road."

And then the conversation strayed to other topics, and Saxon told his friend [illegible] William Trefalden was

coming down on Thursday; and by that time they had reached the park gates, and were driving up to the beautiful old red house, which looked as if dyed in the sunsets of many centuries.

Then the Earl took his guest round to the stables, built on the princely scale of the old Elizabethan days, and now more than three parts empty. Here Saxon saw the stalls set apart for his two thoroughbreds: and presently Major Vaughan came into the yard, white with dust, leading his own beautiful Arabian, Gulnare, and followed by a docile bay, carrying a lady's saddle; and Saxon found that he had been riding with Mademoiselle Colonna.

After this, they strolled about the gardens, and the Earl initiated Saxon into the topography of the smoking room, the billiard-room, and all that part of the house called the bachelors' quarters; and then the gong was sounded, and it was time to dress for dinner.

It was Saxon's first entry into the society of ladies; and this fact, coupled with his reluctance to meet the Colonnas, made him somewhat nervous on going into the drawing-room. The ladies, however, were not yet down; and he found only a group of four men standing round the fire. Two of these were Castletowers and Major Vaughan; the third he at once recognised for the dark-eyed Italian whom he had seen at Reichenau; and the fourth was a stranger.

"My friend, Mr. Saxon Trefalden — Signor Colonna — the Reverend Edwin Armstrong," said Lord Castletowers, getting through the introductions as quickly as he could.

The clergyman bowed somewhat stiffly; but Signor Colonna held out his hand.

"Gervase's friends are mine," he said, with a smile of singular sweetness. "I have heard much of you, Mr. Trefalden, and rejoice to know you. Is this your first visit to Castletowers?"

It was evident that he had no more remembrance of Saxon, than Saxon had of the world before the flood.

At this moment the ladies came in. The Earl, with some ceremony, presented his young friend to his mother, and while Saxon was yet bending over her fair hand, dinner was announced. The Earl immediately gave his arm to Mademoiselle Colonna, Signor Colonna took Lady Castletowers, and the rest followed. Thus it happened that the introduction which Saxon most dreaded was altogether omitted, and that he did not even see Mademoiselle Colonna's face till he had taken his seat at the dining table. He then looked up, and, to his intense discomposure, found her superb eyes turned full upon himself.

"My *vis-à-vis* is, I suppose, your young millionnaire?" she said presently, to Lord Castletowers. "I have met him before; but I cannot remember where."

The Earl laughed, and shook his head.

"Impossible," he replied. "He has only been six or eight weeks in England, and during the whole of that time you have not been up to town, I think, for a single day."

"But I may have met him abroad — perhaps at Milan?"

"He has never visited Italy in his life."

"Well, then, in Paris?"

"And I know that he has never been to Paris. In fact, it is more than improbable that you can have seen

him before this evening. I speak thus positively, because I know all the story of his life up to this time; and a very curious story it is."

"You must tell it to me," said Mademoiselle Colonna.

"I will, by-and-by; and when you have heard it, you will grant that you are only misled by some accidental resemblance."

Mademoiselle Colonna looked at Saxon again. He was talking to Lady Castletowers, and she could scrutinise his features at her leisure.

"I do not think I shall make any such concession to your narrative powers," she said. "The more closely I look at him, the more convinced I am that we have not only met, but spoken — and not very long since, either. Why, I recognise the very inflections of his voice."

"Nay, madam, I claim to be a Swiss," Saxon was saying. "I was born in Switzerland, and so were my father and grandfather before me."

"But Trefalden is not a Swiss name," said Lady Castletowers.

"No, Trefalden is a Cornish name. We are of Cornish descent."

The colour flew to Olimpia Colonna's face at the discovery conveyed to her by these few words.

"I knew it was no accidental resemblance," she said, with a troubled look. "I remember all about him now, and he remembers me. I knew he did — I saw it in his face."

"Then you really have met before?"

"Yes, in Switzerland, a few weeks ago. I — I was so unobservant as to mistake him for an ordinary

peasant, and I — that is to say, we — offended him cruelly. My father has forgotten all about it; but I shall tender him a formal apology by-and-by. I hope he will forgive me."

"Forgive you!" echoed the Earl, in a low, passionate tone.

But Miss Colonna did not seem to hear him.

Later in the evening, when the little party was dispersed about the drawing-room, she turned to Saxon, who was bending over some engravings on a side-table, and said:

"If it were not that oblivion and pardon are thought to go hand in hand, I should ask to be remembered by Mr. Trefalden. As it is, I can only hope that he has forgotten me."

Saxon bowed profoundly.

"I should be much concerned for my memory, madam," he replied, "if that were possible."

She looked at him inquiringly.

"Is that a sarcasm," said she, "or a compliment?"

"I did not mean it for either."

"What is it, then?"

"A simple statement of a simple fact. Mademoiselle Colonna is associated in my memory with the most eventful day of my life, and if I had tried to forget that I had once had the honour of meeting her, it would not have been possible for me to do so. On that day, I first learned the change in my fortunes."

Miss Colonna smiled and put out her hand.

"Then I insist on being forgiven," she said. "I will not consent to be the one disagreeable episode in so bright a story."

"But I can't forgive you twice over," replied Saxon

bashfully, scarcely daring to touch the tips of her delicate fingers.

"Which means that you have done so already? Thank you. And now we must be friends; and you shall come and talk to my father, who is deeply interested in your free and beautiful country. Would that our own beloved Italy were half so happy!"

And with this she took Saxon's arm, and they crossed over to where her father and Major Vaughan were sitting together in earnest conversation.

In the meanwhile, Lord Castletowers was wishing himself in Saxon's place, and thinking how gladly he would have given the best hunter in his stables to be so wronged, and so solicited, by Olimpia Colonna.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Signor Colonna's Den in the Octagon Turret.

GIULIO COLONNA was never so immersed in political labours as during these eight weeks that he and his daughter had been staying at Castletowers. He sat all day, and sometimes more than half the night at his desk, answering letters, drawing up declarations and addresses, and writing fiery pamphlets in Italian, French, and English. Olimpia helped him for many hours each day, often rising at dawn to correct his proofs and decipher his secret correspondence. Every now and then, a special messenger would come down from London by the mid-day express; or a batch of telegraphic despatches would arrive, full of secret information, and so worded as to be unintelligible to all save the receiver. And sometimes Lord Castletowers,

after a hasty summons to the octagon tower, would order out his black mare, and, laden with messages, gallop over to the station as furiously as if the very lives of his guests depended on his speed.

Then Lady Castletowers would look after him with a little deprecating smile, and, turning to the morning visitor who might happen to be sitting with her at the time, would say something about her poor dear friend, Signor Colonna, and those foolish intrigues in which he still persisted in taking so much interest; or would, perhaps, let fall a word of half-implied regret that her son, the Earl, whose English politics were so thoroughly unexceptionable, should yet suffer himself to be attracted by the romance of this so-called "Italian cause."

But the intrigues went on nevertheless; and her ladyship, who was quite satisfied if Signor Colonna showed himself at the dinner-table, and Olimpia spent her evenings in the drawing-room, little dreamed that that room in the octagon tower was the focus of a fast-coming revolution. Fearful things — things that would have frozen the bluest blood in her ladyship's veins — were being done daily under her very roof. Strategical operations were mapped out, and military proclamations translated, by the hand of her own son. Subscriptions to the cause poured in by every post. Revolutionary commissions in embryo, revolutionary regiments were countersigned by Colonna, and dispatched in her ladyship's own post-bag, under cover to all kinds of mysterious Smiths and Browns in different quarters of London; and as for musket-money, it was a marvel that the very cheques which accumulated in her house for that purpose did not explode, and reduce the place to ashes.

In the meanwhile a great storm was really brewing, and the leaven of resistance was at work among the masses of Southern Italy. An insurrection had already broken out at Palermo; but it had hitherto attracted no very serious notice in London or Paris. Honourable members attended to it but slightly, as a mere formidable riot, or a salutary warning to sovereigns who misgoverned their subjects, and neglected the advice of their neighbours. But Giulio Colonna, in his little room at Castletowers, knew well enough how to interpret the first faint mutterings of that distant thunder. He knew where it would break out next, and where the first shaft of the lightning would fall. His own pen was the conductor — his own breath the wind by which the storm clouds were driven.

And yet Colonna was no soldier. A braver man never lived; but the sword was not his weapon. A student in his youth, a delicate man at his prime, he was born for the cabinet and not the camp. Bodies need brains as much, and sometimes more, than they need hands: and Colonna was the brain of his party. He was never more useful to his friends, he was never more formidable to his enemies, than when bending over his desk, pale and sleepless, and never weary.

The Earl of Castletowers had described his friend rightly when he spoke of him as a man of antique virtue. His virtues were precisely of the antique type — so precisely that his detractors ranked some of them but little above vices. In his creed, as in the creed of the Roman citizen during the great days of the Republic, the love of country held the highest place. Italy was his God. To serve her, he thankfully accepted privation, contumely, personal danger, banish-

ment, and oppression. To serve her, he stooped to beg, to dissimulate, to mask hatred with smiles, and contempt with courtesy. To say that he was ready at any moment to lay down his own life for Italian liberty was to say nothing. He was ready to sacrifice his daughter, like Jephtha; or his dearest friends; or his good repute; or innocent blood, if innocent blood were the indispensable condition of success. These were indeed antique virtues — virtues that had nothing in common with the spirit of Christian chivalry. His worst enemies could not deny that Giulio Colonna was a hero, and a patriot. His bitterest slanderers never hinted a doubt of his sincerity. But it was a significant fact that his blindest worshippers, ready as they were to compare him with every hero that made the glory of classic Greece and Rome, never dreamed of linking his name with that of Bruce or Bayard, Washington or La Rochejaquelin. He was, in very truth, more Pagan than Christian; and they instinctively recognised the fact.

Such was Giulio Colonna — a great man, a noble man, an heroic man, after his kind; a man of vast intellectual powers, of untiring steadfastness, of inexhaustible energy and devotion; but a man wholly dominated by a single idea, and unable to recognise any but his own arbitrary standard of right and wrong.

It was the morning after Saxon's arrival at Castletowers. The three young men were out with their guns and dogs, and the Colonnas were busy together in their quiet study in the octagon tower. It was a very small room — a mere closet — with one deep mullioned window, overlooking a formal space of garden. A few prints on the walls, a few books on the

shelves, a bureau, a table heaped with letters and papers, three or four chairs, and a davenport in the recess of the window, were all the furniture it contained. At the davenport sat Olimpia, copying a long list of memoranda, while her father was busy with his morning's correspondence at the larger table. He had received a budget of some forty letters by that post, and was going through them rapidly and methodically, endorsing some for future reference, selecting others for immediate reply, and flinging the rest into a waste-paper basket beside his chair. When the last was disposed of, his daughter lifted up her head, and said: —

"What news to-day, *padre mio?*"

The Italian sighed wearily.

"None," he replied. "None of any value. A few lines from Bertaldi; but he has nothing new to tell. Things remain about the same in Sicily. Garibaldi wants money. Nothing can be done without it — at least, nothing worth doing."

"Better to attempt nothing than make a useless demonstration," said Olimpia, quickly.

"Ay — far better."

"Is that all from Italy?"

"All."

"And from London? I thought I saw Lord Barmouth's handwriting."

"Yes — he sends a cheque for twelve pounds; and here are three or four others, and a subscription from Birmingham — not twenty-five pounds in all!"

Olimpia rose, and laid her hand lovingly upon her father's shoulder.

"Do not be discouraged, *padre mio*," she said. "The

movement is as yet scarcely begun, and our friends have not yet realised the importance of the crisis. The English, we must remember, are not roused to enthusiasm by a few words. When we have proved to them that our people are in earnest, they will help us with their hearts and hands."

"And in the meanwhile, our volunteers are to be slaughtered like sheep, for want of proper weapons!" replied Colonna, bitterly. "No, Olimpia, it is *now* that we need funds — now, when the struggle is scarcely begun, and the work lies all before us. There can be no real discipline without arms, food, and clothing; and without discipline, all the valour in the world is of no avail. What can weaponless men do to prove themselves in earnest?"

"Die," said she, with kindling cheek and eye.

"Yes — we can all do that; but we prefer to do it with something better than a pike or a scythe in our hands."

Saying this, he pushed back his chair, and began walking gloomily up and down the narrow space between the window and the door. He came presently to a sudden halt, looked full into his daughter's eyes, and said: —

"We want twenty-five thousand pounds, at the very least, before another week has passed over our heads."

"So much as that? Alas! it is impossible."

"I am not sure that it is impossible," said Colonna, still looking at her.

"No? what do you mean?"

"Sit down, my child — here, by my side — and I will tell you."

She sat down, and he took her hand between both of his own. Perhaps her heart throbbed for a moment in some vague apprehension of what might next be said; but neither her face nor her hand betrayed emotion.

"There is a young man in this house," said the Italian, "to whom such a sum as twenty-five thousand pounds would be of less importance than a handful of bajocchi to one of our volunteers."

"Mr. Trefalden?"

"Mr. Trefalden. He is worth four or five millions."

"Yes — I remember. We were talking of it at breakfast, a few weeks ago."

"We were; and I promised myself at the time that I would move heaven and earth to gain him over to the cause."

"It will not be difficult."

"In the ordinary degree not all; but we must do more than that."

"It is hopeless to dream that he will give us twenty-five thousand pounds," said Miss Colonna, hastily.

"I mean him to give us a million."

"A million! Are you mad?"

"I mean him to give us a million — two millions — three millions — all he possesses, if less than all will not suffice to set our Italy free! Listen, Olimpia mia — we have been told the strange story of this young man's life. We know how pure, and pastoral, and unworldly it has been. We find him simple and enthusiastic as a child — his heart open to every generous impression — his soul susceptible to every sense of beauty. To such a nature all high things are possible — with such a nature, all that we desire may

be done. I look upon this youth as the destined liberator — as the destined sacrifice!"

Olimpia sighed, and shook her head.

"If he were Italian," she said, "it would be easy — and justifiable."

"Justifiable!" echoed her father, with an angry gesture. "In our holy cause, all means are justifiable. How often must I repeat that to you, Olimpia?"

"It is a point, *padre mio*, on which we can never think quite alike," she replied, gently. "Let it pass."

He dropped her hand; rose abruptly, and walked restlessly to and fro, muttering to himself. She also rose, and stood, waiting, till he should speak again. Then he drew his hand across his brow, and said, harshly:

"The burden of this work must rest chiefly on you, Olimpia."

"I will do what I can," she replied.

"Do you know what you have to do?"

"I think so. I have done it often enough before."

Colonna shook his head.

"No," he said, "that is not enough. You must make him love you — you must make him marry you."

"Father!"

"It is the only certain way to achieve our purpose. He is young and impressionable — you have beauty, fascination, eloquence, and that nameless sway over the will and sympathy of others which has already won hundreds of ardent spirits to the cause. In a week he will be at your feet."

"You ask me to sell myself!" exclaimed Olimpia,

with a magnificent scorn upon her lip that would have become an offended goddess.

"For Italy."

She clasped her hands together, in a wild, passionate way; and went over to the window.

"For Italy," repeated Colonna, solemnly. "For the cause to which I have consecrated you, my only child, since the moment when you were first laid smiling in my arms. For the cause in which my own youth and manhood have been spent. For the cause in which I should not hesitate to go to the stake to-morrow, or to shed your heart's blood with my own hand."

"I had rather give my heart's blood than do this thing," said Olimpia, with averted face.

"The martyr may not choose from what palm his branch shall be severed," replied her father, sternly.

She made no answer, and for some moments they were both silent. Then Colonna spoke again.

"With money now at our command," he said, "success would be certain. Without it, nothing but failure awaits us. Twenty-five thousand pounds, judiciously spent, would equip six thousand men; and with six thousand at his back, Garibaldi would enter Naples in the course of a few days. But what does he say himself? — that whatever is done must be done in the name of Sardinia? In the name of Sardinia, that gives neither a soldier nor a scudo to the struggle! In the name of Sardinia whose king dares not countenance our effort, but who is ready to reap the fruits of our victories! No, no, Olimpia mia — it is not twenty-five thousand pounds that we need. It is a million. With a million, we should free not only the Sicilies,

but the Romagna, and reconstruct the great republic. With a million we may reject the patronage of Victor Emmanuel, and the whole monarchical party!"

"With but one million?" said Miss Colonna, doubtfully.

"With but one — or two, if two be needed, and we have two at command. What is one man's wealth, or one woman's hand, in comparison with results such as these? What is any private interest, when valued against the honour and freedom of a great country?"

Again Olimpia was silent.

"And then," pursued he, eagerly, "with a Roman Senate at the Capitol, and a Dictator at the head of the Roman legions, we shall do that which France and Sardinia together failed of accomplishing. We shall expel the Austrian from the soil, and buy back Venetia with our blood!"

Olimpia turned at last. Her face was very pale, and the burnished gold of her hair crowned her in the sunlight, like a glory.

"Enough," she said, calmly. "This young man's wealth shall be bought for Italy, if aught that I can give will purchase it."

Colonna took her in his arms, and kissed her brow.

"There speaks the true Colonna!" said he. "Had my daughter even given her heart to some other, I should have expected this concession — ay, though he had been the best and bravest of our Italian chivalry; but as it is, I think her duty and her love may yet go together."

"Nay — we will put love out of the question," said she, coldly.

"Heaven grant that I may live to see that day when, through thy deed, my Olimpia, our beloved country shall be free from the shores of the Adriatic to the waters of Tarento!"

"Amen," replied Olimpia, and left the room.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Last Meet of the Season.

When Mr. Trefalden arrived at Castletowers at ten o'clock on Thursday morning, he was somewhat dismayed to find the courtyard crowded with carriages, the terrace full of ladies, and the open, lawn-like space in front of the house all alive with scarlet coats, horses, grooms, and hounds. Having walked across from the station by the field paths, he came upon the noisy scene all at once, and learned from half a dozen voices together, that it was the last meet of the season.

Fully expecting to find his appointment forgotten, and Saxon among the riders, he passed on to the house, where the first person he met was Miss Colonna, *en amazone*, with her riding-whip in her hand, and a drooping feather in her hat.

"Ah, Mr. Trefalden," she said, "we have just been talking of you. You will find none but enemies here."

"I trust that I am not to include Mademoiselle Colonna among that number."

"Of course not," she replied, with a smile that had some little mockery in it. "Is not Mr. Trefalden enrolled among the Friends of Italy? By the way, you have not yet seen yourself in our printed report for

March. I have placed your name at the head of a column."

The lawyer bowed, and professed himself infinitely flattered.

"May I ask," said he, "why I am so unfortunate as to have provoked all this enmity to which you refer?"

"Because your presence deprives us of the pleasure of your cousin's society, and prevents him from putting on a scarlet coat, and distinguishing himself as a mighty hunter before the ladies."

"When he would infallibly have broken his neck," said Mr. Trefalden, drily.

"By-the-by, why did you not tell me he was your cousin, that day we met at Reichenau?" asked Miss Colonna, with provoking directness.

"I really cannot tell — unless I supposed the fact could have no kind of interest for you."

"Or were you afraid I should want to enlist him also? But here is my steed."

"May I be permitted to assist you to mount, Mademoiselle Colonna?"

"Many thanks," she said, as, having taken her tiny foot with the reverence of a devotee, Mr. Trefalden lifted her dexterously to the saddle, and arranged the folds of her habit. "I had really no idea, Mr. Trefalden, that you, a doctor learned in the law, were also an accomplished cavalier."

"Why not, Signora?"

"Indeed, I can hardly say; but I should as soon have thought of exacting escort-duty from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Do you hunt?"

"I have hunted; but not for several years. I have no time for cruelty, as a fine art."

"A subtle distinction, I presume, between business and pleasure," said she, laughingly. "I beg you to understand, however, Mr. Trefalden, that *I* do not hunt at all. I only ride to cover, and see the hounds throw off. I love to hear their 'gallant chiding' — but I am always sorry for the fox."

"I fear Lord Castletowers will not endorse that amiable sentiment," replied the lawyer, as the Earl came running down the broad stone steps, followed by some five or six other gentlemen. Seeing Mademoiselle Colonna already in the saddle, he bit his lip, and said, with unconcealed disappointment: —

"Has Vaughan again anticipated me in my office?"

The proud blood rose to Olimpia's cheek.

"To assist a lady whose horse waits at the door, is, I believe, the office of whatever gentleman may be at hand, Lord Castletowers," she replied, haughtily. "Mr. Trefalden was so obliging as to help me to mount this morning."

The Earl turned, in some confusion, and shook hands with his lawyer.

"I beg your pardon, Trefalden," he said, hastily. "I had not observed you. Won't you take a run with us? Ah, no — I forgot. You are here to-day on business; but we shall meet at dinner. You will find your cousin in the dining-room."

And with this he sprang upon his black mare, reined up beside Mademoiselle Colonna, and began speaking in a low, earnest tone, that was audible to her alone. But the lady answered him briefly, bade Mr. Trefalden a courteous good morning, and rode

swiftly out of the court-yard, followed by the red-coats as by a guard of honour.

Mr. Trefalden looked after them, and smiled thoughtfully.

"Poor Castletowers!" said he to himself. "She has no heart for anything but Italy."

And then he went into the house, where he found the breakfast over, the dining-room deserted, and everybody out upon the terrace. It was a large assembly, consisting chiefly of ladies, and the general interest was at that moment centred in the hunting party, then gaily winding its way down the green slope, and through the chequered shade of the oaks.

When the last gleam of scarlet had disappeared, Mr. Trefalden went up to Saxon, who was standing somewhat dolefully apart from the rest, laid his hand upon his shoulder, and said: —

"'Why so dull and mute, young sinner?' Is it so hard a fate to stay in-doors and read through a bagful of musty parchments when others are breaking their necks over five-barred gates?"

Saxon turned with his frank smile, and grasped his cousin's hand.

"It did seem hard a minute ago," replied he; "but now that you are come, I don't care any longer. Castletowers said we were to go into the library."

"Then we will go at once, and get our business over. I hope your brains are in good order for work this morning, Saxon."

But Saxon laughed, and shook his head doubtfully.

"You must be my brains in matters of this kind, cousin William," said he. "I understand nothing about money, except how to spend it."

"Then, my dear fellow, you know more than I gave you credit for," replied Mr. Trefalden. "Money is a very pleasant and desirable thing, but there are three great difficulties connected with it — how to get it, how to keep it, and how to spend it; and I am not at all sure that to do the last in the best way is not the hardest task of the three. My business with you to-day, however, concerns the second of those propositions. I want to show you how to keep your money; for I fear there are only too many who enjoy teaching you the way to spend it."

They had now reached the library, a long, low room, panelled and furnished with dark oak, and looking out upon the same quiet garden that was commanded by the window of Signor Colonna's little study. The recesses at each side of the fireplace, and the whole length of the opposite wall, were fitted with shelves protected at the edges by strips of stamped and gilded leather. The books upon these shelves were mostly antique folios and quartos in heavy bindings of brown and mottled calf and consisted of heavy archæological and theological works, county histories, chronologies, sermons, dictionaries, peerages, and parliamentary records. Here and there a little row of British essayists, or a few modern books in covers of bright cloth, broke the ponderous monotony; but the Castletowers collection, being chiefly made up of those works which it is said no gentleman's library should be without, was but a dull affair upon the whole, and attracted few readers. A stag's skull and antlers presided spectrally above the door, and an elaborate genealogical tree of the Castletowers family, heavily framed in old black oak, hung over the mantelpiece like a hatchment.

"Well, cousin William," said Saxon, with an anticipative yawn, "where is the bag of parchments?"

But Mr. Trefalden laid only his pocket-book and a small case-map on the table before him.

"The bag," he replied, "was but a figure of speech, a legal fiction. I have no parchments whatever to inflict upon you — nothing but a few columns of figures, a letter or two, and a map of Western Asia."

Saxon opened his eyes.

"What in the world have I to do with Western Asia?" said he.

"That is just what I am here to tell you."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The New Overland Route.

"In the first place, Saxon," said Mr. Trefalden, "I have done for you what I suppose you would never have thought of doing for yourself: I have had your account made up at Drummond's. I confess that the result has somewhat surprised me."

"Why so?"

"Well, not because you have spent a great deal of money in a very short time, for I anticipated that; but because so many of your cheques appear to have gone into the pockets of your friends. Here, for instance, is the name of Sir Charles Burgoyne — a name which recurs no fewer than fourteen times within the space of five weeks. The first entry is for five hundred and twenty-five pounds; date, the twenty-first of March."

"That was for the mare and cab," said Saxon, quickly. "It was his own favourite mare, and he let

me have her. He had been offered five hundred and fifty, only a day or two before."

Mr. Trefalden smiled dubiously, and glanced back at a memorandum entered in his note-book a few weeks before, when sitting behind that morning paper, in a window of the Erectheum club-house. The memorandum told a different tale. He contented himself, however, with writing the words "mare and cab" against the sum, and then went on.

"Second cheque — six hundred and ten pounds; date, the twenty-ninth of March."

"My two riding horses and their equipments," explained Saxon.

"Humph! and were these also Sir Charles Burgoyne's favourites?"

"No, not at all. He was kind enough to buy them for me, from a friend who was reducing his establishment."

Mr. Trefalden checked off the six hundred and ten pounds, as before.

"Third cheque — two thousand pounds; date, the thirty-first of March."

"Oh, that's nothing," said Saxon. "That's not spent — it's only borrowed."

"By Sir Charles Burgoyne?"

"Yes."

"And the next for two thousand five hundred, dated April the third?"

"I — I rather think that's borrowed also," replied Saxon.

"Then come various smaller cheques — four hundred, two hundred, and fifteen, fifty-seven, one hundred and five, and so forth; and by-and-by another heavy sum

— one thousand and fifty pounds. Do you remember what that was for?"

"Yes, to be sure; that was the thousand guineas for the mail phaeton and pair; and even Castletowers said it was not dear."

Mr. Trefalden turned to another page of his note-book.

"It seems to me," observed he, "that Lord Castletowers is the only young man of your acquaintance whose friendship has not been testified in some kind of pecuniary transaction. Here, now, is the Honorable Edward Brandon. Has he also been generously depopulating his stables in your favour?"

Saxon laughed, and shook his head.

"I should think not, indeed!" said he. "Poor Brandon has nothing to sell. He hires a horse now and then, when he has a sovereign to spare — and that is seldom enough."

"Which, being translated, means, I presume, that the two thousand and odd pounds paid over at different times to Mr. Brandon are simply loans?"

"Just so."

"And Guy Greville, Esquire — who is he?"

"One of our Erectheum men; but that's a mere trifle."

"You call two hundred and fifty pounds a mere trifle? Howard Patrick Fitz Hugh, Esquire — four hundred pounds. Is he another member of your club?"

"Yes, a very pleasant fellow, an Irishman."

"Both loans, of course?"

Saxon nodded.

"Then come a number of miscellaneous cheques,

evidently payments to tradesmen — one, I see, of nearly a thousand to Hunt and Roskell. How much of that went for the prima donna's bracelet, you young rogue?"

"I haven't the least idea. Gillingwater takes care of the bills."

"There is another little item that must not be forgotten," said the lawyer; "namely, that trifle of fifty-nine thousand pounds to Mr. Laurence Greatorex."

"Which is not spent, but deposited," said Saxon, sagely.

"Exactly so, and which might have been deposited to equal advantage in the crater of Vesuvius. But enough of details. Have you any notion of what the sum total amounts to?"

"None whatever."

"What do you say to seventy-eight thousand six hundred and twelve pounds?"

"I am afraid I have no original remarks to offer upon the fact," replied Saxon, with unabated cheerfulness. "What is your opinion, cousin William?"

"My opinion is that a young man who contrives to get through more than fifteen thousand pounds of uninvested capital per week, would find the air of Hanwell highly conducive to his general health."

"But, cousin, do you think I have done wrongly in spending so much?"

"I think you have done foolishly, and obtained no kind of equivalent for your money. I also think you have been unscrupulously plundered by your acquaintances; but, after all, you have gained some little experience of life, and you can afford to pay for it. To tell you the truth, I foresaw something of this kind for

you; and, having introduced you to Lord Castletowers, I purposely kept myself and my advice in the background for a few weeks, and let you take your first plunge into the world in whatever way you pleased. I had no wish, Saxon, to play Mentor to your Telemachus."

"I should have been very grateful to you, though," said Saxon.

"Well, I am just going to begin, so you can be grateful by-and-by," replied Mr. Trefalden, with his pleasant smile. "I am here to-day for the purpose of inoculating you with financial wisdom, and pointing out to you how absolutely necessary it is that your fortune should be invested to advantage."

"You told me that before."

"Yes; but now I am about to prove it. Eight weeks ago, young man, you were worth four million seven hundred and seventy-six thousand pounds. Since that time, you have disembarrased yourself of a good deal of the odd money; but putting that aside, we will, if you please, for the sake of convenience, reckon your fortune in round numbers at four millions and a half."

"Certainly at four millions and a half," repeated Saxon, wearily.

"Well, have you ever asked yourself how long your four millions and a half are likely to last, if you simply go on as you have begun?"

"No — but they would last out my life, of course."

"They would last you just six years, nine weeks, and three days."

Saxon was speechless.

"You can now judge for yourself," said Mr. Tre-

falden, "whether your money ought, or ought not, to be placed at interest, and whether I am making myself needlessly obnoxious to you to-day, when you might have been galloping after the fox. What you require, Saxon, is a fixed income."

"Yes — I see that."

"And as I told you long since, your property, if well invested, will bring you a princely revenue. At five per cent. it will produce two hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year; and at seven and a half per cent., three hundred and seventy-five thousand — more than a thousand pounds a day. I believe, Saxon, that I have found you an investment at seven and a half per cent. for as much of your fortune as you may be inclined to put into it."

"A thousand pounds a day! — seven and a half per cent.!" stammered Saxon. "But isn't that usury, cousin William?"

"Usury!" repeated Mr. Trefalden, with an amused smile. "Why, my dear fellow, no man of business ever calculates on making less than seven or eight per cent. of his capital!"

"But then he *is* a man of business, and his skill and experience make part of his capital; so he ought to gain more than a rich idler who only invests his wealth for an income," replied Saxon, with a flash of practical good sense that showed how easily he could master even the science of money, if he chose to think about it.

Mr. Trefalden was positively startled. He had so accustomed himself of late to think of his young kinsman as a mere child in wordly affairs, that he had,

perhaps, insensibly fallen into the error of under-estimating his abilities.

"There is some truth in what you observe, Saxon," said he; "but it is a truth that does not affect the present question. It would take too long, and lead us too far from the subject in hand, to go into it philosophically; but you may rely on my experience when I tell you that, as a private individual, you have every right to accept seven and a half per cent., if you can obtain it with safety. My aim is to ensure you a liberal income; and if I have been somewhat tardy about it, you must blame my over-anxiety, and not my want of zeal."

"Dear cousin William, I have never dreamed of blaming either!" exclaimed Saxon, warmly.

"I have throughout been keenly sensible of the responsibility that devolves upon me in this matter," continued Mr. Trefalden. "And I confess that, up to the present time, I have been cautious to timidity."

"I am sure of it — sure of it," said Saxon, with outstretched hand; "and am so heartily grateful that I know not in what words to put all I should like to say."

"I am very glad you place such confidence in me," replied the lawyer, returning the young man's cordial grasp; but the voice and the hand were both cold and unimpulsive.

With this he turned to his papers, placed them ready for reference, and opened out the map upon the table. Then he paused, as if collecting his thoughts upon the subject on which he was next about to speak. Prompt man of business as he was, one might almost have thought that Mr. Trefalden was reluctant to ap-

proach the very topic which he had come all the way from London to discuss. At length he began: —

"Like most cautious persons, Saxon, I am no friend to speculation; but I do not, like those who are over cautious, confound speculation with enterprise. In England our great public works are almost invariably originated and conducted by private bodies; and herein lies the chief spring of our national prosperity. Enterprise has made us what we are: mere speculation would have ruined us. What I have to propose to you, Saxon, is an enterprise of extraordinary importance — a gigantic enterprise, as regards its result, and one of comparatively trifling magnitude as regards its cost. But you must give me all your attention."

"Indeed, I am doing so."

"I need not ask if you know the ordinary line of route from England to India, by way of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea?"

"The Overland Route? Certainly — upon the map."

"And you know the track of our merchant vessels to India and China, round the Cape of Good Hope?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Then oblige me by glancing at this map, and following the line which I have marked upon it in red ink. It begins, you see, at Dover, and proceeds, by Calais and Marseilles, to Alexandria, where —"

"But I see two red lines crossing the Mediterranean," interrupted Saxon.

"We will follow this one first. At Alexandria it joins the railway, is carried across the Isthmus to Suez, thence traverses the Red Sea to Aden, and proceeds by the Arabian Sea to Bombay. This route is the pre-

scriptive property of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam-packet Company. Following it, one may travel from London to Bombay in twenty-four days; and we have hitherto been accustomed to regard the accomplishment of this fact as one of the triumphs of modern civilisation."

"And so it is!" exclaimed Saxon.

"Ay, but it costs over a hundred pounds," replied Mr. Trefalden; "and the traveller who cannot afford so large a fare, must go round by the Cape, and so lose either ninety-four days in a steamer, or four months in a sailing-vessel. Now, look at my other red line, and see where it departs from the first."

"It passes through the Straits of Messina, touches at Cyprus instead of at Malta, and goes direct to Sidon, instead of to Alexandria," said Saxon, now both surprised and interested.

"Precisely so; and from Sidon takes an almost direct course to Palmyra, whence it follows the valley of the Euphrates, and comes out upon the Persian Gulf at the point where the united waters of the Euphrates and Tigris empty themselves into the sea, one hundred and thirty miles below Korna."

"And then it goes straight down the Persian Gulf, and over to Bombay," said Saxon.

Mr. Trefalden looked up, with his finger on the map.

"If," said he, "this line from Sidon to the sea represented a fine railway, in connection with a first-class steam-packet service at either extremity, which route to India do you think you would prefer?"

"This, of course. No man in his senses could do

otherwise. The distance, to begin with, must be much less?"

"About twelve or fourteen hundred miles."

"And then there would be far more of the journey performed by land — and through what a land! Palmyra! — the plains of Babylon! — Bassora! — By Jove! one would make the journey to India for the mere sake of visiting places so famous in the history of the ancient world!"

"I confess that I regard this project from a less archæological point of view," replied Mr. Trefalden. "Now, hear the practical side of it; and understand that I am giving you only approximate facts — facts in the rough, before they have been squared and smoothed by surveyors and accountants. We calculate that this line of railway will extend over about seven hundred and fifty, or eight hundred miles; that is to say, it will exceed the line now laid down between Calais and Toulon by not more than a hundred and fifty or two hundred miles. It will unquestionably draw to itself the whole merchant traffic of India, China, Persia, and Ceylon. It will be the nearest route to Australia, and it will bring Bombay within twelve or fourteen days of London."

"It takes one's breath away!" said Saxon.

Mr. Trefalden smiled — a smile of quiet triumph.

"But this is not all," said he. "We have reason to believe that at Hit, where there are mineral springs, we shall find coal; and as Hit lies very nearly halfway between Sidon and the Gulf, we shall be enabled to supply our steam-service at both shores, and our whole line of railway from one central source."

"Those must be the bituminous fountains mentioned

by Herodotus," said Saxon, quickly; "the fountains of Is that supplied asphalte for cementing the walls of Babylon!"

"If possible, Saxon, oblige me by confining your attention to the nineteenth century," expostulated the lawyer. "Try to think of Babylon as a railway station, and of Palmyra as a place where the guard allows twenty minutes for refreshments. Yes — I knew that would appal you. Now, perhaps you will give me your opinion of the new overland route."

"My opinion!" replied Saxon. "You might as well ask my opinion of the geology of Uranus!"

"That is the very consideration which deters me from recommending it to you as an investment."

"Oh, you need not let it do that," laughed Saxon. "I am as ignorant of one business matter as another. I told you just now that you must be my brains, whenever money came in question!"

"But what makes it still more difficult is, that in this case I may not let you benefit by any other person's brains," replied Mr. Trefalden. "There are many interests to be combatted in the promotion of such a scheme as this; and it is of importance that we keep it, for the present, profoundly secret. Whether you interest yourself in it or not, I must bind you over, Saxon, to breathe no word of this matter to any living ear."

Saxon gave the promise unhesitatingly; but did not understand why it should be necessary.

"Because we must not rouse opposition before our system is matured," explained Mr. Trefalden.

"But if the new route is so great an improvement," *urged* Saxon, "who would oppose it?"

"All those persons who are interested in the old one," replied his cousin, smiling. "The Peninsula and Oriental Steam-packet Company — the shareholders and directors of the Suez Railway — the forty thousand English who colonise Alexandria."

"And would all those persons be ruined?"

"Every reformation ruins somebody," observed Mr. Trefalden, philosophically.

"Yes, but the reformer is bound to balance present evil against future good. Would the future good, in this case, outweigh the present evil?"

"Unquestionably."

"In what way?"

Mr. Trefalden was momentarily puzzled. He had contemplated this subject from all sides except the one now presented to him. The benevolent point of view had never occurred to him.

"Well," he suggested, "it will give employment to thousands——"

"But it will throw thousands out of employment."

"—— it will promote commerce, extend the boundaries of civilisation, improve Arabia——"

"I wouldn't help to ruin forty thousand English for the sake of improving Arabia," interrupted Saxon, hastily.

"—— and bring the shores of England and Hindostan so near that, were another mutiny to break out, we could land our troops at Bombay within twelve days after receiving the intelligence. The value of that possibility alone is incalculable."

"That is true; but——"

"And of our absolute success," continued Mr. Trefalden, "there can be no kind of doubt. I have been

almost unwilling, Saxon, to embark you in an enterprise the advantages of which, however obvious to practical men, are not open to immediate test; but it is my duty to tell you that I have never known so brilliant an opening for the employment of capital."

"But——"

"Seven and a half per cent. is merely the rate of interest offered by the company while the works are in progress; but when once the route is completed, the returns will be enormous. Your seven and half per cent., my dear fellow, will become twenty-five, perhaps fifty."

"I don't want twenty-five, or fifty," replied Saxon. "I have more money now than I know what to do with."

"I am sure you will always make good use of whatever wealth you possess," said Mr. Trefalden.

"And it would break my heart to injure all those who live by the present system. Why, for instance, should I desire to ruin the Peninsular and Oriental Steam-packet Company?"

"We hope to do no such thing," said Mr. Trefalden. "We shall propose a coalition, and probably employ the very same vessels."

"And then the English colony at Alexandria!"

"Sidon will become what Alexandria is now — or rather will become a far more important place than Alexandria has ever been since the days of her ancient prosperity. Just as we now require banks, warehouses, quays, and churches at Alexandria, we shall then require them at Sidon. The Alexandrian colonists are wealthy and enterprising: they will simply remove to

the new port, and in ten years' time will be richer than if they had remained where they were."

"Do you really think so?"

"I do not think it; I know it. And the Suez Railway Company will fare no worse than the rest. We shall in all probability take their whole body of officials into our service, and incorporate the shareholders' interests with our own. But the fact is, Saxon, you know too little of life to be able to judge a question of this kind; and I see you do not take kindly to the idea, so we will say no more about it."

"I could not have borne to do harm," said Saxon; "but now that you explain the matter so fully, I am quite willing——"

But Mr. Trefalden would not hear of it.

"No, no," he said, coldly, gathering up his papers and folding his map. "I was anxious to do all that was possible for your interests; but it is, perhaps, better that you have nothing to say to the New Route."

"Yet, if you think well of it——"

"I think so well of it, that I am about to invest all I possess in the company's shares; but that need not influence you. In point of fact, Saxon, I had rather leave your money in the funds. You will get only three per cent.; but then you can re-invest when you please, and the responsibility of advising you will be mine no longer."

"You are vexed with me, cousin William!"

"I regret that you think me capable of advising you to do what would not be right," replied Mr. Trefalden somewhat stiffly.

"But I think nothing of the kind! I was in error

just now; but, as you said only a moment before, I know nothing of life, so pray do not hold me accountable for the sins of my ignorance."

"Tush! not another word," said the lawyer, kindly. "You have said more than enough."

"And the investment?"

"With regard to the investment, I think the most satisfactory course will be for me to leave your money in government stock, at three per cent. Even so, it will bring you one hundred and thirty-five thousand per annum."

"As you please. It will be less trouble to spend, and make me quite as happy."

Mr. Trefalden looked very grave.

"It will also leave you with less to give, and less power to make others happy," he said.

The careless smile faded from Saxon's lips.

"I wish I knew what I ought to do!" he exclaimed with an impatient sigh. "What do you really *wish* me to do, cousin William?"

"I had rather not say more than I have already said," replied Mr. Trefalden. "You have had my advice."

"So I have — and of course I ought to follow it. You won't refuse to help me to do so?"

"Certainly not. You need only make your decision, and give me your instructions."

"I have decided. Invest the money, by all means, and let there be an end of it."

"And how do you wish me to invest it, Saxon?" asked Mr. Trefalden, with his pen in the ink.

"In the New Route, of course!"

"In one hundred pound shares, in the New Over-

land Route Steam-packet and Railway Company, Limited," said the lawyer, scribbling rapidly. "And to what amount?"

"To whatever amount you think proper."

"Shall we say to the extent of two millions?"

"Why only two? What is to be done with the rest?"

Mr. Trefalden stooped over his writing and a keen observer might have seen that he changed colour.

"I do not recommend you," he said, "to invest more at present. As it is, you will be the largest shareholder on the list; and by-and-by, if the company should see fit to raise further capital, you can purchase additional shares. I must trouble you to sign this paper, Saxon — it is a power of attorney, which gives me authority to sell out your two millions."

The young fellow took his cousin's pen, and scrawled his name as carelessly as if he were signing away a couple of pounds.

"You ought never to subscribe your name to a paper without reading it," said Mr. Trefalden. "Remember that. By the way, Saxon, I shall see that you are entered as a director."

"As a director, if you please, then, who is not expected to do anything," replied Saxon, laughing. "Are you also a director?"

"No; I am only solicitor to the company. But now that our business is settled, would you not like to glance over these tables of estimates? Here, you see, is a plan of the route, and here the probable cost per mile, including ——"

"I beg your pardon, cousin William," interrupted Saxon, "but if our business *is* settled, I protest against

hearing another word about the route. For pity's sake let us go out, and forget all about it!"

"I fear," said Mr. Trefalden, "that you are utterly incorrigible."

"I know I am. Do you ride?"

"Yes; now and then."

"Then we will go in search of the hunting party."

So Mr. Trefalden put his tables of estimates back into his pocket-book, and business was banished beyond recal. Then they went round to the stables, and Saxon ordered out his two thoroughbreds.

"I trust you have not forgotten what I said to you at Reichenau on the subject of fetters, Saxon," said Mr. Trefalden, as they cantered presently across the park. "Mademoiselle Colonna is a dangerous neighbour. Beware of her."

Saxon laughed gaily.

"Fear nothing on my account, cousin William," said he. "I have the advantage of Achilles — there isn't a vulnerable point about me."

"We are all apt to think so till the arrow finds us out. However, if even your heart is safe, I still say beware — for your cheque-book. Has the Signora levied no patriotic tax upon you yet?"

"None whatever."

"That's ominous, with a revolt actually in progress. She is reserving her strength, that the blow may fall the heavier when it comes. All I implore is, Saxon, that when Mademoiselle Colonna, or her father, shall solicit your support, you will confine yourself to a money contribution — and pledge yourself to nothing foolish."

"Of course not; but what else could I pledge myself to?"

"Heaven knows! She is capable of asking you to take the command of a troop."

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Rich Miss Hatherton.

An evening party at Castletowers was a momentous affair. It involved a good deal of expense, and a vast amount of anxiety; for the hereditary coffers were ever but scantly furnished, and the hereditary hospitality had to be kept up at any cost. How some of Lady Castletowers' few but elegant entertainments *were* paid for, was a secret known only to her son and herself. Sometimes an oak or two was felled in some remote corner of the park; or the Earl denied himself a horse; or the carriage was left unrenovated for half a year longer; or her ladyship magnanimously sacrificed her own brief visit to London in the season. Anyhow, these extra expenses were certain to be honourably met in such a manner that only the givers of the feast were inconvenienced by it.

On the present occasion, however, Lord Castletowers had been compelled to apply to his solicitor for an advance upon his next half-yearly receipts; and when William Trefalden went down that Thursday morning to see his cousin Saxon, he brought with him a cheque for the Earl. The party was fixed for the following evening; but Mr. Trefalden could not be prevailed upon to stay for it. He was obliged, he said, to go back to town that same night by the last

train; and he did go back (after making himself very pleasant at dinner) with Saxon's signature in his pocket-book.

It was a very brilliant party, consisting for the most part of county magnates, with a sprinkling of military, and a valuable reinforcement of dancing men from town. Among the magnates were Viscount and Lady Esher, a stately couple of the old school, who, being much too dignified to travel by railway, drove over with four horses from Esher Court, a distance of eighteen miles, and remained at Castletowers for the night. The Viscount was lord lieutenant and custos rotulorum of the county, and had once held office for three weeks as President of the Board of Perquisites; a fact to which he was never weary of alluding. There, too, were Sir Alexander and Lady Hankley, with their five marriageable daughters; the Bishop of Betchworth and Mrs. Bunyon; Mr. Walkingshaw, of Aylsham, one of the richest commoners in England, with Lady Arabella Walkingshaw, his wife, and their distinguished guest Miss Hatherton of Penzance, whose father had begun life as a common miner, and ended it with a fortune of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. These, together with Lord Boxhill; His Responsibility Prince Quartz Potz, the Prussian Envoy; a few local baronets and their families; an ex-secretary of legation; and a number of lesser stars, parliamentary, clerical, and official, made up the bulk of the assembly. There were also three or four celebrities from the lower paradise of arts and letters — Sir Jones de Robinson, the eminent portrait painter; Signor Katghuttini, the great Dalmatian violinist; Mr. Smythe Browne, the profound author of "Transcendental Eclecticism," and

Mrs. Smythe Browne, who wrote that admirable work on "Woman in the Camp, the Council, and the Church" — a very remarkable couple, whose distinguishing characteristics were that Mrs. Smythe Browne wore short hair and shirt collars, while the sandy locks of Mr. Smythe Browne floated upon his shoulders, and he displayed no vestige of linen whatsoever.

By nine o'clock the guests began to arrive. By ten, the reception rooms were well filled, and dancing commenced in the great hall. Though rarely thrown open to the light of day, the great hall, with its panellings of dark oak, its carved chimney-piece, its gothic rafters, and its stands of rusty armour, some of which dated back to the field of Agincourt, was the glory of Castletowers. Brilliantly lighted, decorated with evergreens and flowers, and echoing to the music of a military band, it made such a ball-room as one might vainly seek in any country but our own.

Lady Castletowers received her guests near the door of the first reception-room, looking very stately, and more like Marie Antoinette than ever, in her glitter of old family diamonds. Gracious to all, as a hostess should be, she nevertheless apportioned her civilities according to a complex code of etiquette. The smile with which she greeted Viscount Esher differed by many degrees from that with which she received Sir Jones de Robinson; and the hand extended to Mrs. Smythe Browne was as the hand of an automaton compared with that which met, with a pressure slight yet cordial, the palm of the rich Miss Hatherton.

"But where is the noble savage?" said this latter, surveying the room through her double eye-glass. "I

have heard so much about him, my dear Lady Castletowers, and I am dying to see him!"

Miss Hatherton was a tall, handsome young woman of about five or six and twenty, with black eyes, fine teeth, a somewhat large, good-natured mouth, and a very decisive manner. She made one of a little privileged knot that was gathered behind Lady Castletowers; and amused herself by criticising the guests as they came up the stairs.

"The noble savage!" repeated Lady Castletowers. "Who *can* you mean, Miss Hatherton?"

"Who should I mean, but this young man who has inherited the famous legacy?"

"Mr. Trefalden? Oh, he was here but a few moments ago. There he stands, by the fireplace."

"The Antinous with the golden curls? But, my dear Lady Castletowers, he's absolutely beautiful! And he doesn't look savage at all. I had expected to see a second Orson — a creature clothed in raiment of camel's hair, or the skins of wild beasts. I declare, I am disappointed."

"Mr. Trefalden is a very pleasant person," said Lady Castletowers, with a faint smile. "And very unassuming."

"Is he indeed? Pleasant and unassuming — dear me, how very charming! And so rich, too! Worth millions upon millions, I am told. I used to think myself above the reach of want, at one time; but I feel like a pauper beside him. Who is this stout person now coming up the stairs, covered with as many stars as the celestial globe?"

But before Lady Castletowers could reply, the

thundered forth by the groom of the chambers, and the noble Prussian was bending profoundly over the fair hand of his hostess.

"What a funny little fat man it is!" said the heiress, in her loud way, looking after His Responsibility through her glass, as he passed on towards the adjoining room.

"Prince Quartz Potz, my dear Miss Hatherton, is a highly distinguished person," said Lady Castletowers, greatly shocked.

"Oh, yes — I know he is."

"He is distantly connected through his maternal great grandmother, the Margravine of Saxe Hohenhausen, with our own Royal family; and the present Grand Duchess of Zollenstrasse is his third cousin twice removed."

Miss Hatherton did not seem to be at all impressed by these facts.

"Ah, indeed," said she indifferently. "And this fine man with a head like a lion — who is he?"

"Mr. Thompson, the member for Silvermere," replied Lady Castletowers, when the gentleman had made his bow and drifted on with the stream.

"What, the great Thompson? — the Thompson who instituted that famous inquiry into the abuses of the Perquisite Office?"

"I do not know what you imply by 'great,' my dear Miss Hatherton," said the Countess, coldly; "but I believe Mr. Thompson's politics are very objectionable."

"Ah, I see you don't like him; but I shall implore you to introduce me, notwithstanding. I have no politics at all, and I admire talent wherever it is to be

found. But in the meanwhile, I have lost my heart to Antinous, and am longing to dance with him. Do pray make us known, dear Lady Castletowers."

"Upon whom does Miss Hatherton desire to confer the honour of her acquaintance?" asked Lord Castletowers, who happened to come by at the moment. "Can I be of any service?"

"Of the utmost. I want to be introduced to this Mr. Trefalden, about whom all the world has been talking for the last five or six weeks."

"I will perform the office with great pleasure. Will you allow me to hand you to a seat, while I go in search of him?"

"Thanks. And be sure you make him dance with me, Lord Castletowers — I want to dance with him above all things. He *can* dance, I suppose?"

"Of course. How can you ask such a question?"

"Because I have been told that he was a perfect wild man of the woods before he inherited his fortune — couldn't write his name, in fact, six weeks ago, and had never seen a sovereign in his life."

"If you mean that he has not yet been presented at St. James's, you are probably right," replied the Earl, smiling.

"What, a pun, Lord Castletowers? How shocking! I did not believe you capable of such an enormity. But do pray tell me a little truth about your friend; for I daresay I have heard plenty of fiction. Was he not really a barbarian after all?"

"No more than I am."

"Is it possible?"

"Nor is that all. Saxon Trefalden has plenty of solid learning under those yellow locks of his, Miss

Hatherton. He speaks French, Italian, and German with equal facility; he is a first-rate mathematician; and as for his Greek and Latin scholarship, I have known nothing like it since I bade farewell to the dear old professors at Magdalen College."

"Well, you surprise me very much," said Miss Hatherton, "and I cannot deny that I'm disappointed. I had far rather he had been a barbarian, you know. It would have been so very delicious!"

"Perhaps, then, you will be consoled by finding him as unsophisticated as a child. But you shall judge for yourself."

And with this, the Earl installed Miss Hatherton in an easy-chair, and went in search of Saxon. The heiress immediately turned to her nearest neighbour, who happened to be the Bishop of Betchworth, and began a conversation. It was Miss Hatherton's way to be always talking — and somewhat loudly, too.

"What have I done, my lord," said she, "that you have scarcely spoken to me this evening? I have a thousand questions to ask you. I want to know how the renovations are going on; and if you are really to have a stained oriel, after all. And what are you going to do about that grand carved old screen? I have been told it is past repairing, and cannot possibly be put up again. I hope that's not true."

"I am happy to say that it is not," replied the bishop, who was a very handsome man, and much admired by the ladies of his diocese. "I believe we shall be able to restore the worst parts, and that it will keep its old place for the next two or three centuries. About the east window I am less hopeful."

"Why so?" asked the heiress.

"I fear we cannot afford it."

"But how is that? I thought there was a large surplus fund in hand."

"There was; but we have found since then that the spire is in a much worse state than we had at first supposed; and to put it into thorough repair will swallow up the whole of our available money."

"Dear, dear, I'm so sorry!" said the heiress. "You really want the stained window. One misses the poetry of colour in Betchworth Cathedral. How much would it cost?"

"More than we could hope to raise after the liberal subscriptions already granted. A thousand pounds."

"So large a sum? Ah, bishop, if I were one of your flock, I should ask leave to put that window in. However, if you like to open a fresh list, you may put me down for two hundred and fifty."

"My dear lady," said the prelate, "what can I say in acknowledgment of such munificence?"

"Only, I beg, that you will try to get the rest of the thousand as quickly as you can. But here comes my partner."

And Miss Hatherton turned to Lord Castletowers, who had found and captured Saxon, and now stood with him beside her chair.

"Will you permit my friend Mr. Trefalden the pleasure of dancing with you, Miss Hatherton?" said he.

"I am delighted to make Mr. Trefalden's acquaintance, and shall be most happy to dance with him," replied the heiress, putting out her hand as cordially and unceremoniously as if Saxon were an old friend

already. "What are they doing in the hall now, Lord Castletowers?"

"Finishing a waltz — which will be followed by a quadrille."

"Then we shall be just in time for the quadrille. Won't you find us a pleasant vis-à-vis?"

"Will you accept me, if I can find a partner?"

"Delightful! Bishop, we must have another moment's chat before the close of the evening."

Saying which, Miss Hatherton gathered her ample skirts together, took Saxon's proffered arm, and swept through the room and down the wide old stairs in a very stately fashion.

CHAPTER XXX.

The Hospitaller's Gate.

Mr. Keckwitch sat alone in a little private parlour at the back of the bar of the Hospitaller's Gate tavern, with a bottle of brown sherry and a couple of glasses before him, waiting patiently. It was the evening of the very day that his employer spent at Castletowers; but he had not, therefore, left Chancery-lane over five minutes the sooner, or neglected any detail of his regular work. He had, on the contrary, seen his fellow-clerks off the premises, and locked up the office with even more than his usual caution; for Abel Keckwitch was such a highly respectable man, that he would not on any account have taken advantage of Mr. Trefalden's absence. He was waiting, as he had just told the "young lady" who presided at the bar in ringlets and pink ribbons, for a friend. It was about eight

o'clock in the evening, and although the sky was as yet only grey with dusk, the gas was already lighted; for the Hospitaller's Gate was a queer, old-fashioned, shut-in place, and the daylight always seemed to make a point of getting away from it as early as possible. There was, however, a bright fire burning in the grate; and the bar beyond was all alive with customers. The tops of the great yellow puncheons and the lacquered gas-burners were visible above the blind that veiled the half-glass door of the parlour; and now and then some privileged customer would peep over, stare at the back of Mr. Keckwitch's head, and disappear. But the clerk sat, all unconscious, gazing placidly at the fire, and never once looked round.

But for the brisk trade going on within the precincts of the Gate itself, the place would have been singularly quiet. The passers-by, just at this hour, were few. Sometimes a cab drove up; sometimes a cart rumbled past, but not often. The great stream of traffic flowed close by, along a neighbouring thoroughfare, and was hoarsely audible, like the dull roar of a heavy sea; but the Hospitaller's Gate stood apart, grey, and hoary, and stored with strange old memories, spanning the shabby by-street with its battlemented arch, and echoing, in a ghastly way, to the merriment below.

Standing in the very heart of the City, within a few yards of Smithfield-market, and in the midst of the over-crowded parish of Clerkenwell, this rare old mediæval fragment was scarcely known even by name to the majority of Londoners. To the Smithfield drover, the student of Bartholomew's, the compositors of Tallis's press, and the watchmaking population in

general, it was a familiar spot. Archæologists knew of its whereabouts, and held occasional meetings in the oak room over the gateway, where they talked learnedly of Jorden Briset, the patriarch Heraclius, Thomas Docwrey, Stow, and King Harry the Eighth; and oftentimes moistened their dry discussions with rare old port from cellars that had once held good store of malmsey and sack for the pious knights' own drinking. Literary men remembered it as the cradle of the "Gentleman's Magazine," and as the place where Samuel Johnson, in his rags and his pride, ate his dinner behind a screen, like a dog fed from his master's table. But these were pretty nearly all who knew or cared about the Hospitaller's Gate. Hundreds of intelligent Londoners passed within fifty yards of it every day of their lives, ignorant of its very existence. Of the dwellers to the west of Temple-bar not one in a thousand knew that scarcely a stone's throw from the Charter-house walls there yet stood some portion of a far more venerable religious foundation, begun in the last year of the eleventh century, and linked with many strange and stirring episodes of English history. Even so true a lover of the antique and picturesque as Leigh Hunt passed it by, in his pleasant memories of the town, without a word.

But Mr. Keckwitch was thinking neither of the good Knights Hospitallers, nor of Dr. Johnson, nor of anything nor any one just then, saving and excepting a certain Mr. Nicodemus Kidd, who had promised to meet him there about eight o'clock that Thursday evening. And Mr. Kidd was late.

The clock in the bar had struck eight long ago. The clock of St. John's Church close by had struck a

quarter past, and then half-past, and still Mr. Kidd was not forthcoming. The head clerk looked at his watch, sighed, shook his head, poured out a glass of the brown sherry, and drank it contemplatively. Before he had quite got to the end of it, a jovial voice in the bar, and a noisy hand upon the latch of the glass door, announced his friend's arrival.

Mr. Kidd came in — a tall, florid, good-humoured looking fellow, with a frank laugh, a loud, cheery voice, and a magnificent pair of red whiskers. The practised observer, noting his white hat, his showy watchguard, his free and easy bearing, would have pronounced him at first sight to be a commercial traveller; but the practised observer would for once have been wrong.

"Sorry to have kept you waiting, Mr. Keckwitch," said he, nodding familiarly to his entertainer, drawing a chair to the opposite side of the fire, and helping himself at once to a glass of wine. "Not my fault, I assure you. Sherry, eh? Capital sherry, too. Don't know a better cellar in London, and that's saying something."

"I'm very glad you have been able to look in, Mr. Kidd," said the head clerk, deferentially. "I was particularly anxious to see you."

Mr. Kidd laughed, and helped himself to a second glass.

"It's one of the peculiarities of my profession, Mr. Keckwitch," said he, "that I find the world divided into two classes of people — those who are particularly anxious to see me, and those who are particularly anxious not to see me. Uncommon good sherry, and no mistake!"

Mr. Keckwitch glanced towards the glass door, edged his chair a little nearer to that of his guest, and said, huskily: —

"Have you had time, Mr. Kidd, to think over that little matter we were speaking about the other day?"

"That little matter?" repeated Mr. Kidd, in the same loud, off-hand way as before. "Oh, yes — I've not forgotten it."

He said this, filling his glass for the third time, and holding it in a knowing fashion between his eye and the lamp. The head clerk came an inch or two nearer, and, bending forward with his two fat hands upon his knees, ejaculated: —

"Well?"

"Well, Mr. Keckwitch?"

"What is your opinion?"

Mr. Kidd tossed off the third glass, leaned back in his chair, and, with a smile of delightful candour, said: —

"Well, sir, to be plain with you, I can give no opinion till you and I understand each other a little better."

Mr. Keckwitch breathed hard.

"What do you mean, Mr. Kidd?" said he. "Haven't I made myself understood?"

Mr. Kidd pushed his glass away, thrust his hands into his pockets, and became suddenly grave and business-like.

"Well, sir," replied he, dropping his noisy voice and jovial smile as if they had been a domino and mask, "this, you see, is an unusual case. It's a sort of case we're not accustomed to. We don't go into

things without a motive, and you've given us no motive to go upon."

The clerk's face darkened.

"Isn't it motive enough," said he, "that I want information, and am willing to pay for it?"

"Why, no, Mr. Keckwitch — not quite. We must be satisfied about the use you will make of that information."

"And supposin' I don't want to make use of it at all?"

"Then, sir, I'm afraid we can't help you. We are not spies; we are a legal force. Our business is to promote the ends of justice — not to serve private curiosity."

Mr. Keckwitch looked down, silent, baffled, perplexed.

"I should have thought," said he, "that the mere fact of any professional man keepin' his home and his ways so deadly secret, would be motive enough for inquiry. Where there's mystery, there's safe to be something wrong. People ain't so close when they've nothing to hide."

"Some folks are eccentric, you know, Mr. Keckwitch."

"It ain't eccentricity," replied the clerk, promptly.

"What then?"

"I can't say. I may have my suspicions; and my suspicions may be right, or may be wrong. Anyhow, one can't see far in the dark."

"No, that's true," replied Mr. Kidd.

"If it was no more than his address, I'd be satisfied," added Keckwitch, staring hard at the fire.

"Now, I tell you what it is, sir," said the other,

"we must have *your* motive. Why do you want to know a certain person's address? What is it to you where he lives, or how he lives?"

"It is a great deal to me," replied Mr. Keckwitch. "I'm a respectable man, and I don't choose to work under any but a respectable employer."

Mr. Kidd nodded, and caressed the red whiskers.

"If, as I suspect, there's somethin' wrong somewhere," the clerk went on to say, "I don't want to be mixed up in it when the day of reck'nin' comes round."

"Of course not."

"And there's *my* motive."

"Have you always been on good terms, Mr. Keckwitch, with the party in question?"

This was said very sharply and suddenly, but the clerk's face remained stolid and inexpressive as ever.

"Well, Mr. Kidd," said he, "I can't say there's ever been much love lost between us. I've done my duty, and I don't deny that he's done his; but we've been neither friends nor enemies."

Mr. Kidd stared hard at Mr. Keckwitch, and Mr. Keckwitch stared at the fire; the one all scrutiny, the other all unconsciousness. For some minutes both were silent, and the loud mirth at the bar became more distinctly audible. Then Mr. Kidd drew a deep breath, pushed his chair back with the air of one who arrives at a sudden resolution, drew a slip of paper from his waistcoat pocket, and said: —

"Well, sir, if the address is all you require — here it is."

The steely light so rarely seen there, flashed into

Abel Keckwitch's eyes, and his hand closed on the paper as if it had been a living thing trying to fly away. He did not even look at it, but imprisoned it at once in a plethoric pocket-book with a massive metal clasp that snapped like a handcuff.

"What's the fee?" said he, eagerly. "What's the fee for this little service, Mr. Kidd?"

"That's a question you must ask at head-quarters, sir," replied Mr. Kidd, eyeing the clerk somewhat curiously, and already moving towards the door.

"But you'll take another glass of sherry before you go?"

"Not a drop, sir, thank you — not a drop. Wish you good evening, sir."

And in another moment, Mr. Kidd, with the white hat a trifle on one side, and the jovial smile seeming to irradiate his whole person, had presented himself at the bar, and was saying agreeable things to the young lady with the ringlets.

"Ah, sir," observed she, playfully, "I don't care for compliments."

"Then, my dear, a man must be dumb to please you; for if he has eyes and a tongue, what can he do but tell you you're an angel?"

The barmaid giggled, and bade the gallant stranger "get along!"

"It's a remarkable fact," said Mr. Kidd, "that the prettiest women are always the most hard-hearted. And it's an equally remarkable fact that the sight of beauty always makes me thirsty. I'll trouble you, Mary, my love, for a bottle of Schweppe."

"That's a good sort of fellow, I'll be bound!" ejaculated a stout woman, looking admiringly after Mr.

Kidd, as he presently went out with an irresistible air of gentlemanly swagger.

"You think so, do you, ma'am?" said a seedy bystander. "Humph! That's Kidd, the detective."

CHAPTER XXXI.

About Switzerland.

YOUR English matchmaker is, for the most part, a comfortable matron, plump, good-natured, kindly, with a turn for sentiment and diplomacy. She has, "The Etiquette of Courtship and Marriage" at her fingers' ends; and gives copies of that invaluable little manual to her young friends, as soon as they are engaged. When the sermon is dull, she amuses herself by reading the solemnisation of matrimony. She delights in novels that have a great deal of love in them, and thinks Miss Bremer a finer writer than Mr. Thackeray. To patch up lovers' quarrels, to pave the way for a proposal, to propitiate reluctant guardians, are offices in which her very soul rejoices; and, like the death-bed hag in the Bride of Lammermoor who surveyed all her fellow creatures from a professional point of view, seeing "a bonny corpse" in every fine young man about that country side, she beholds only bridegrooms and brides elect in the very children of her friends, when they come home for the holidays.

Lady Arabella Walkingshaw, was an enthusiastic matchmaker. She had married off her own daughters with brilliant success, and, being a real lover of the art of matrimony, delighted "to keep her hand in," among the young people of her acquaintance. What whist was to Mrs. Battle, matchmaking was to Lady

Arabella Walkingshaw. "It was her business, her duty, what she came into the world to do." She went about it scientifically. She had abstruse theories with respect to eyes, complexions, ages, and Christian names; and even plunged into unknown physiological depths on the subject of races, genealogies, ties of consanguinity, and hereditary characteristics. In short, she constructed her model matches after a private ideal of her own. But hers was not altogether a sentimental, nor even a physiological, ideal. She was essentially a woman of the world; and took an interest quite as deep, if not deeper, in the pairing of fortunes as of faces. To introduce an income of ten thousand a year to a dowry of fifty thousand pounds, and unite the two sums in the bonds (and settlements) of wedlock, was to Lady Arabella, an enterprise of surpassing interest. She would play for such a result as eagerly and passionately as if her own happiness depended on the cards, and the stakes were for her own winning.

With such a hobby kept perpetually saddled in the chambers of her imagination, it was not surprising that the sight of Saxon Trefalden leading Miss Hatherton down to dance, should have sufficed to send Lady Arabella off at a canter.

"What a charming match that would be!" said she to Mrs. Bunyon. Mrs. Bunyon was the wife of the handsome Bishop, tall, aristocratic-looking, and many years his junior. Both ladies were standing near their hostess, and she was still welcoming the coming guest.

"Do you think so?" said Mrs. Bunyon, doubtfully. "I don't see why."

"My dear Mrs. Bunyon — two such splendid fortunes!"

"The less reason that either should marry for money," replied the Bishop's wife. "Besides, look at the difference of age!"

"Not more than five years," said Lady Arabella.

"But it would be five years on the wrong side. What do you say, Lady Castletowers — would they make a desirable couple?"

"I did not hear the names," replied Lady Castletowers, with one of her most gracious smiles.

"We were speaking," said the matchmaker, "of Miss Hatherton and Mr. Trefalden."

The smile vanished from Lady Castletowers' lip.

"I should think it a most injudicious connexion," she said, coldly. "Mr. Trefalden is a mere boy, and has no position beyond that given to him by the accident of wealth."

"But wealth *is* position," said Lady Arabella, defending her ground inch by inch, and thinking, perhaps, of her own marriage.

"Miss Hatherton has fortune, and may therefore aspire to more than fortune in her matrimonial choice," replied the Countess, with a slightly heightened colour, and dropped the conversation.

Mrs. Bunyon and Lady Arabella exchanged glances, and a covert smile. Moving on presently with the stream, they passed out of Lady Castletowers' hearing, and returned to the subject.

"Their united fortunes," pursued Lady Arabella, "would amount to five millions, if not more. Only conceive it — FIVE MILLIONS!"

"You will meet with no sympathy from Lady Castletowers," said the Bishop's wife, significantly.

"Evidently not. Though, if there were really a coronet in prospect . . . ."

"I think there *is* a coronet in prospect," said Mrs. Bunyon.

Lady Arabella shook her head.

"No more than there is a crown matrimonial," said she. "I am a close observer of young people, and I know quite well what direction the Earl's inclinations take."

"Indeed!"

"He is over head and ears in love with Mademoiselle Colonna," said Lady Arabella, confidentially. "And has been, for years."

"Does Lady Castletowers know it?"

"I think not."

"And do you suppose they are secretly engaged?"

"Oh, dear, no. Mademoiselle Colonna, I believe, discourages his attentions — greatly to her credit."

"It is a marriage that would be highly distasteful to Lady Castletowers," observed Mrs. Bunyon.

"It would break her heart," said Lady Arabella.

"She is ambitious."

"— and poor. Poor as a mouse."

If Lady Castletowers had not been a Countess, a Holme Pierrepoint, and the daughter of an Earl, Lady Arabella Walkingshaw could scarcely have forgiven her this fact. She was one of that large majority who regard poverty as a crime.

In the meanwhile, Miss Hatherton had found that Saxon could not only dance, but, when the first shyness of introduction had worn off, could actually talk as well. So she set herself to draw him out, and his naïveté amused her excessively.

"I don't mean to let you hand me to a seat, and get rid of me, Mr. Trefalden," said she, when the quadrille was over, and the dancers were promenading up and down the hall. "You must sit down in this quiet little nook, and talk to me. I want you to tell me ever so much more about Switzerland."

"I am glad to find anyone who cares to hear about it," said Saxon. "It is a subject of which I am never weary."

"I dare say not. I only wonder how you can endure this life of tinsel and glitter after the liberty of the mountains. Are you not disgusted with the insincere smiles, and polite falsehoods of society?"

Saxon looked at her with dismay.

"What do you mean?" said he. "The world here has been very kind to me. I never dreamt that its smiles were false, or its kindnesses insincere."

Miss Hatherton laughed.

"You'll find it out," said she, "when you've lived in it a little longer."

"I hope not. I should be very unhappy if I thought so."

"Well, then, don't think so. Enjoy your illusions as long as you can. I have outlived mine long ago; and I'm sorry for it. But let us talk of something pleasanter — of Switzerland. Have you ever hunted the chamois?"

"Hundreds of times."

"How charming! High up, I suppose, among the snows?"

"Among the snows, along the edges of precipices, across the glaciers — wherever the chamois could

spring, or the foot of the hunter follow," replied Saxon, with enthusiasm.

"That's really dangerous sport, is it not?" asked the heiress.

"It is less dangerous, of course, to the practised mountaineer than to one who is new to the work. But there can be no real sport without danger."

"Why so?"

"Because sport without danger is mere slaughter. The risks ought never to be all on the side of a helpless beast."

"That is just and generous," said Miss Hatherton, warmly.

Saxon blushed, and looked uncomfortable.

"I have not only been over a glacier, but down a crevasse, after a chamois, many a time," said he, hurriedly. "I shot one this very spring, as he stood upon an ice-ridge, between two chasms. I ought not to have done it. I ought to have waited till he got to a more open spot; but, having him well within range, I brought him down. When I reached the spot, however, there was my chamois wedged half way down a deep, blue, cruel-looking crevasse — and I had no alternative but to get him out, or leave him."

"So you cut steps in the ice, as one sees in the pictures in the Alpine Club books!"

"No — I simply tied the cord that every mountaineer carries, round the stock of my rifle — fixed the gun firmly across the mouth of the chasm — and let myself down. Then I tied another cord round my chamois, and when I had reached the top again, I drew him up after me. Nothing is easier. A child can do it, if he is used to the ice, and is not afraid.

In all glacier work, it is only the rash and the timid who are in danger."

"And what other sport do you get?" asked Miss Hatherton. "Are there any eagles about the mountains of the Grisons?"

"Not so many as there used to be. I have not shot more than five or six within these last three years; but I robbed many an eagle's nest when I was a boy. Then, you know, we have the steinbok, and in winter the wolf; and sometimes we get the chance of a brown bear."

"Have you ever shot a bear, Mr. Trefalden?" said Miss Hatherton, intensely interested.

"I have shot two," replied Saxon, with a flush of boyish pride, "and made sledge-rugs of their skins. You have never been in Switzerland?"

"Oh yes, I have," replied Miss Hatherton; "but only in the beaten tracks, and under the custody of a courier, like a maniac with a keeper."

"Ah, you really know nothing of the country," said Saxon. "Neither of the country nor the people. The Switzerland that the Swiss loves, is that wild, free, upper region where there are neither roads nor hotels, tourists nor guides, but only dark pine forests and open plateaus, the haunt of the marmot, the ptarmigan, and the chamois."

"I never saw but one chamois," said Miss Hatherton, "and that was a poor fat melancholy creature in a cage."

"Of course you never visited Switzerland in the winter?"

"Oh dear, no."

"And yet that is the most glorious time of all,

when the plateaus are all sheeted with snow, and the great peaks rise above them like marble obelisks, and even the pines stand out white against the deep blue sky. It is like a world awaiting the creation of colour."

"What an enthusiast you are," laughed Miss Hatherton.

"I love my country," replied Saxon.

"You need not tell me that. But what can you do in winter, snowed up in those wild valleys?"

"We are not snowed up. We have sledges; and the deeper the snow lies on the roads and passes, the better our sledges fly along. You should see the Rheinthal between Chur and Thusis, on a bright day in the depth of winter, when the sledges flash along in the sunshine, and the air is full of the music of the bells."

"How delightful!"

"Indeed it is delightful. Then we also skate, practise with the rifle, carve wooden toys, and attend to the winter work of our farms; and sometimes, if there is a wolf or a wild boar about the neighbourhood, we have a great hunt by torchlight. Winter is the time for Switzerland! Ask any Swiss who is not a townsman, and he will tell you the same story."

"I suppose you mean to go back there some day?" said Miss Hatherton.

"Go back!" echoed Saxon. "Why, of course I do. It is my own country — my home!"

"Then if I were to come some Christmas to Chur, would you be very kind to me, and show me some of these winter sports?"

"That I would!" exclaimed Saxon. "And I would buy the loveliest Canadian sledge for you that money

could purchase; and you should see a boar hunt by torchlight; and a *Schützen Fest;* and a wrestling match; and I would find you a young marmot for a pet. Above all, you would know my dearest father, and if you loved Switzerland for no other reason, you would love it for his sake."

"Your father?" said Miss Hatherton. "I had no idea your father was living."

"He is my uncle," replied the young man; "but my father by adoption. He is a Lutheran pastor — a miracle of erudition; but as simple as a child, and as pious as an apostle."

"I hear you are terribly learned yourself, Mr. Trefalden," said Miss Hatherton, rising abruptly. "But what is this they are going to do — a waltz? Do you waltz?"

"Try me," replied Saxon, merrily. "It is our national dance — the only dance I ever knew, till I learned these hideous quadrilles a few weeks ago."

In another moment he had encircled the heiress's waist with his arm, and was flying round the hall with her in those smooth, swift circles which no dancers, however good, can execute like the Germans and Swiss. Miss Hatherton was delighted; for she valued a good partner above all things, and Saxon was the best waltzer in the room.

She would willingly have danced and talked with him all the rest of the evening; for Miss Hatherton liked to be amused, and cared very little for the remarks of lookers-on; while Saxon, pleased with her blunt cordiality, would with equal readiness have gone on waltzing, and praising a Swiss life, till it was time to hand her to her carriage. But this was not to be,

Lady Castletowers, who, in her quality of hostess, always knew what her guests were doing, was by no means disposed to permit any such proceeding: so she despatched her son to dance with the heiress, and, having sent for Saxon, herself handed him over to Miss Colonna for the next quadrille.

By this time the arrivals were over, and the departures had begun; and after supper was served, the rooms cleared rapidly. By two o'clock, all were gone, save those guests who remained for the night, and of these there were about a dozen.

Then Viscount and Lady Esher, who had brought valet and maid in their suite, retired to the stately apartments prepared for their reception; and the young men all went down to the Earl's smoking-room; and the Colonnas, instead of going to bed like the rest of the guests, repaired to the little study in the turret. They had much to talk over. Mr. Thompson, the liberal member, had brought them information of Garibaldi, and a packet of letters from friends in London and Turin; Miss Hatherton and Mr. Walkingshaw had promised contributions to the funds; and Mrs. Bunyon had undertaken to distribute some addresses, and fill up a card, among her friends. With the Eshers and Lord Boxhill there was, of course, nothing to be done. Like Lady Castletowers, they looked upon liberty as a vulgar institution; and upon patriots in general as doubtful characters.

The letters read, and such entries made as were necessary, the father and daughter rose to say good night.

"You have done nothing yet, Olimpia," said the Italian. "Here is the fourth day already gone."

"I know it."

"I have talked with him once or twice about our country's cause, and he listens willingly; but I have purposely abstained from doing more. The work is yours — why do you delay it?"

"I will not delay it longer," replied Olimpia, impatiently; "I will begin it to-day."

"He is so rich," said Colonna, "and Italy so poor; and every letter we receive is a prayer for help!"

"You need not urge me. Have I not said to day? — and see, the grey is already in the sky!"

She bade him good night abruptly, and went along the silent corridors to her own room far away. But the grey had paled to white, and the white had turned to sunlight, before she took the flowers from her hair, or the bracelets from her arms, or even seemed to remember that it would be well to seek an hour or two of sleep. What wonder, then, that when at last she threw herself, half dressed, upon the bed, her eyes looked worn and hollow, and her cheek scarcely less white than the pillow against which it was laid?

CHAPTER XXXII.

How Saxon Improved the Weathercock at Castletowers.

"WHAT the deuce can we do to amuse all these people?" said Lord Castletowers to Major Vaughan, as they met on the stairs before breakfast, the morning after the party. "The Eshers, I know, go early, and my mother will take care of the ladies; but here are six or eight men in the house, none of whom are likely to leave before night. What is to be done?"

"Billiards?"

"Well enough for an hour or two; but *après?*"

"We might ride over to Guildford, and beat up the quarters of those Forty-second men who were here last night."

"Impossible. There are only five riding horses in the stables, including yours and Trefalden's; and I haven't even got guns enough to take them out shooting, if there were anything to shoot, except rooks — which there isn't!" said the Earl, in despera-tion.

"Then I don't know what we can do, unless we put on the gloves; but here comes the Arcadian, perhaps he can suggest something."

The Arcadian meant Saxon. It was a soubriquet that had befallen him of late, no one knew how. The difficulty was no sooner explained to him, than he proposed a way out of it.

"Let us organise a *Volksfest* in the Swiss fashion," said he. "We can shoot at a mark, leap, run foot races; and invite the ladies to award the prizes."

"A famous idea!" exclaimed the Earl. "The very thing for a bright cool day like this."

"We must choose a space of level sward to begin with," said the major, "and improvise a grand stand for the ladies."

"And elect an umpire," said Saxon.

"And look up some prizes," added the Earl. "I will give that bronze cup in the library — it is an antique from Pompeii."

"And I, my inlaid pistols," said Saxon.

"And I . . . bah, I am such a poor devil," said

Vaughan. "I possess nothing of any value — except my sword and my horse."

"The best riches of a soldier, Major Vaughan," said Mademoiselle Colonna. "But may I ask why this parliament is being held upon the stairs?"

She had just come, unheard, along the carpeted corridor, and stood waiting a few steps higher than the trio in consultation. She wore a delicate grey dress of some soft material, trimmed with black velvet, and a little linen collar fastened at the throat by a circular brooch of Roman gold. Behind her, fell the folds of a crimson curtain; whilst, through the uppermost roses of a huge Gothic window that reached from nearly the top to the bottom of the great oak staircase, a stream of vivid sunshine poured down upon her head, so that she stood in the midst of it, in her pale, proud beauty, as if enclosed in a pillar of light.

The three men looked up, dazzled, almost breathless, as if in presence of some glorified apparition; and for a moment none replied.

Mademoiselle Colonna, divining, perhaps, with her fine womanly instinct, the spell by which they were bound, moved a step lower, out of the sunshine, and said:

"All silent? Nay, then, I fear it is not a parliament, but a plot."

"It *is* a plot, signora," replied Vaughan. "We are planning some out-of-door sports for this afternoon's entertainment. Will you be our Queen of Beauty, and graciously condescend to distribute the prizes?"

The Earl coloured up, and bit his lip impatiently.

"Vaughan's promptitude," said he, "bears hardly upon those whose wit, or audacity, is less ready at command. I had myself intended to solicit this grace at Miss Colonna's hands."

"The race, my dear fellow, is to the swift, and the battle to the strong, in the affairs of life," replied Vaughan, carelessly. "But what says our sovereign lady?"

"That she dares not pledge her royal word too hastily. Mine, you know, is not an honorary secretaryship; and I know not what work this morning's post may bring for my pen. Besides, I must hear what arrangements Lady Castletowers may have in contemplation."

"I don't think my mother will make any that shall deprive us of the light of her countenance on such an important occasion," said the Earl. "But there goes the gong. We must adjourn this debate till after breakfast."

Lady Castletowers was pleased to approve her son's scheme, and promised not only to honour the ground with her presence at half-past two o'clock, but to bring with her two young ladies who had slept at the house and were to have been driven home early in the morning. These were the daughters of a poor clergyman who lived about twelve miles off, and, being very young and timid, looked up to the stately Countess as though she were the queen of heaven. Miss Colonna, being urged thereto by Lady Castletowers herself, was induced to accept the royal office; and, although Viscount and Lady Esher were, of course, too magnificent to alter their plans, and drove away behind their four

horses shortly after breakfast, the patronage of the little fête promised to be quite brilliant enough to stimulate the ambition of the candidates.

It was a happy thought, and gave ample occupation to everybody concerned. There were six young men that day at Castletowers besides Sir Charles Burgoyne, Major Vaughan, and Saxon Trefalden, who were permanent guests. These six were the Hon. Pelham Hay, of Baliol College, Oxford; the Hon. Edward Brandon; Lieutenant Frank Torrington, of the Fourth Lancers; Mr. Guy Greville, of the Perquisite office; and two brothers named Sydney and Robert Pulteney, belonging, as yet, to no place or profession whatever. There was not "the making" of one really prominent man among the whole half-dozen. There was not, perhaps, one more than commonly clever man; but they were, for all that, a by no means indifferent specimen lot of the stuff of which English gentlemen are made. They were all of patrician blood — all honourable, good-natured, good-looking, manly young fellows, who had been brought up to ride, speak the truth, and respect the gamelaws. They dressed perfectly, and tied their cravats to admiration. They spoke that conventional dialect which passes for good English in good society, and expressed themselves with that epigrammatic neatness that almost sounds like wit, and comes naturally to men who have been educated at a great university and finished in a crack regiment, a government office, or a Pall-Mall club. And they were all dancing men, and nearly all members of the Erectheum. Of the whole set the Hon. Edward Brandon was the most indifferent specimen of the genus homo; yet even he, though short enough of brain, did not want for breeding,

and, however poorly off for muscle, had as much "pluck" as many a better man.

The whole breakfast party hailed the scheme with enthusiasm, and even Signor Colonna said he would go down to see the running. Prizes were freely subscribed over the breakfast-table. Lady Castletowers promised a curious yataghan that had belonged to Lord Byron, and been given to her late husband by a member of the poet's family; Signor Colonna offered an Elzevir Horace, with the autograph of Filicaja on the title page; and the competitors united in making up a purse of twenty guineas, to be run for in a one-mile race, and handed over by the winner to Miss Colonna for the Italian fund. As for the young men, they despatched their breakfasts with the rapidity of schoolboys on a holiday morning, and were soon hard at work upon the necessary preparations.

To choose and measure a smooth amphitheatre of sward about half a mile from the house, set up a winning-post for the racers, a target for the marksmen, and a temporary grand stand for the spectators, was work enough for more than the four hours and a half that lay between ten and half-past two; but these amateur workmen, assisted by the village carpenter and his men, as well as by all the grooms, gardeners, and odd helps that could be got together, worked with so good a will that the ground was ready a full hour and three-quarters before the time. The grand stand alone was a triumph of ingenuity. It consisted of a substratum of kitchen tables securely lashed together, on which were placed a carpet and some chairs, the whole structure being surmounted by a canopy formed

of a rick cloth suspended to a tree and a couple of tall stakes.

Having gone once over the course at a "sling-trot," just to try the ground, the young men returned to the house at one o'clock, furiously hungry, and in tremendous spirits.

Castletowers had ordered luncheon to be prepared for them in the smoking-room, and there, laughing, talking, eating, and drinking all at once, they made out the programme of the games.

"What shall we begin with?" said the Earl, pencil in hand. "We must end, of course, with the one-mile race, and I think we ought to take the rifle work first, before running has made our hands less steady."

"Of course. Rifles first, by all means," replied three or four voices together.

"Names, then, if you please. Now, gentlemen, who goes in for the bronze cup at eight hundred yards?"

"On what conditions?" asked one of the lunchers.

"The usual conditions. Five shots each, at eight hundred yards; ordinary Enfield rifle; Wimbledon scoring, that is to say, outer, two; centre, three; bull's-eye, four."

"Eight hundred's rather long practice for outsiders," said another man, immersed at the moment in chicken-pie.

"If we had small bores, I should put it down at a thousand," replied the Earl; "but there's only one in the house."

The man in the pie was heard to mutter something unintelligible about the abundance of great bores; but being instantly choked by his nearest neighbour, re-

lapsed into moody silence. In the meanwhile the Earl continued to canvass for competitors.

"Come," said he, "this will never do. I have only three names yet — Burgoyne, Torrington and Vaughan. Whom else? I can't enter myself for my own prize, and I must have three more names."

"You may put me down, if you like," said Mr. Guy Greville. "I shall be sure to shoot somebody; but it don't signify."

"And me," added Pelham Hay.

"Thanks. Burgoyne, Torrington, Vaughan, Greville, Pelham Hay — five won't do. I want six at least. Come, gentlemen, who will stand for number six?"

"Why, Trefalden, of course!" exclaimed Vaughan. "The Swiss are born *tirailleurs*. Put his name down."

"No, no," said Saxon, hastily. "Not this time."

"But, my dear fellow, you are *de la première force*, are you not?" asked Castletowers.

"I used to shoot well enough, when I was in practice," said Saxon, with some embarrassment; "but I'd rather not compete now."

The Earl looked surprised, but was too well bred to insist.

"If you won't," said he, "I must find some one who will. Syd. Pulteney, I shall enter you for my sixth shot, and that settles match number one. Gentlemen, the secretary waits to enter names for the second rifle match; the prize for which will consist of a magnificent pair of elaborately ornamented pistols, generously offered by an honourable competitor who declines to compete. I do not mention the honourable competitor's name, because he is a modest young man,

and given to blushing. Now, gentlemen, you will please to remember that this is a solemn occasion, and that the eyes of Europe are upon you!"

And so, rattling on in the gaiety of good spirits, the Earl enrolled the second party. Next in order came the long jump of eighteen feet, for Signor Colonna's Elzevir Horace; then the race of one hundred yards, for Lady Castletowers' prize: and, last of all, the one-mile race for the twenty-guinea purse, dignified by the name of "the Italian Cup," and entered for by the whole of the athletes.

When the programme was fairly made out, Castletowers called Saxon aside, and, taking him familiarly by the arm, led him into the billiard-room adjoining.

"Trefalden," said he, "may I ask you a question?"

"Twenty, if you like," replied Saxon.

"No — one will do, if you answer it honestly. Why don't you put in a shot at either of the rifle-matches?"

Saxon looked embarrassed.

"I'd rather not," he said, after a momentary pause.

"But why? You must be a good marksman."

Saxon made no reply.

"To tell you the truth," said the Earl, "I'm disappointed. I had looked to you for a display of skill, and expected something brilliant. I think you should have gone into the field, if only to maintain the honour of the Swiss rifles."

Saxon laughed good-temperedly.

"Do you really want your question answered?" said he.

"Of course."

"Then wait a minute while I fetch my gun."

He ran out of the room, and presently re-appeared outside the window, rifle in hand.

"Look there," he said, pointing to the roof of the stables. "Do you see that weathercock?"

It was a gilt cock, like that which Göthe used to admire, as a child, on the Ober Main Thor at Frankfort; and was just then shifting with the breeze, and flashing in the sunshine like a yellow diamond. The Earl threw up the window and leaned out.

"I should think so," he replied. "I have seen it pretty nearly every day of my life, ever since I was born.

"How far off is it, do you think?"

"Well, I hardly know; perhaps six hundred yards. But you can't hit a thing that blazes like a comet, and is never still for two seconds together."

"It's an ugly bird," said Saxon, bringing his gun to his shoulder. "Don't you think he'd look more intelligent if he had an eye in his head?"

The words were no sooner out of his lips than he fired. Lord Castletowers snatched up his hat and bounded down upon the sward.

"You haven't done it?" he exclaimed. "It's impossible!"

"Let us go and see."

They had to go round by the front of the house, and across the yards, to reach those outbuildings over which the vane was placed. When they had gone about two-thirds of the distance, the Earl suddenly stood still.

There was a small round hole drilled through precisely that part of the cock's head where his eye ought to have been.

At the sight of his friend's dumb amazement, Saxon roared with laughter, like a young giant.

"There," said he, "I told you it would be an improvement. And now you see why I wouldn't compete for the cup. We Swiss are always shooting from the time we are old enough to carry a gun; and I didn't want to spoil the sport for the others. It wouldn't have been fair."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Rifle Match.

At half-past two an open carriage drove up to the ground, and four ladies alighted. They were received by Lord Castletowers, handed to their seats, and presented with written programmes of the games. Miss Colonna was installed in the central arm-chair, which, being placed a little in advance of the other seats, and dignified with a foot-stool, was styled, somewhat magniloquently, the Throne. Scarcely had they taken their places, when two more carriages appeared upon the scene, the first of which contained Lady Arabella Walkingshaw and Miss Hatherton, and the second, Mrs. Cadogan, the wife of the Sedgebrook vicar, and her two daughters. The latter, hearing down in the village what was doing in the park, had come over to see the sports; but Lady Arabella's visit was made in exclusive pursuance of her own little game, and bore no kind of reference to any that might be set on foot by other people. She was, therefore, rather put out than otherwise when, instead of finding Lady Castletowers at home she was informed that "my lady was gone across

the park to see the gentlemen race, and had left word, if any friends called at the house, that there would be seats for them, if they liked to follow." Miss Hatherton, however, was delighted.

"It's perfectly charming," said she, as they turned down the drive leading to that part of the park indicated by the servant. "You cannot think how pleased I am, Lady Arabella!"

"Well, my dear, then I am pleased too," replied Lady Arabella, benevolently.

"There's nothing I enjoy so much as contests of this kind," Miss Hatherton went on to say. "Boat-races, horse-races, reviews, anything, so long as skill, strength, or speed is in question. Why, I haven't missed a Derby-day for the last five years; and as for the Roman Carnival, the only thing I care for in it is the horse-race. I'm always sorry the Jews don't run instead. It would be so much more amusing."

"You droll creature," said Lady Arabella, with a faint smile. "I wonder if Mr. Trefalden will take part in these games?"

"Of course he will — and win all before him. He's as fleet as a chamois, depend on it."

"I hope they won't fire," said Lady Arabella, with a little lady-like shudder.

"And I hope, above all things, that they will. But then, you know, dear Lady Arabella, I have no nerves. Why, this is delightful — there's quite a crowd!"

And so there was. News is contagious, and propagates itself as mysteriously as the potato disease. The whole neighbourhood had already heard of what was doing at the park; and every farmer, gamekeeper,

and idle fellow about the place, was on the ground long before the hour appointed. As for the women and children, nothing short of polygamy could account for their numbers.

"Lady Arabella Walkingshaw and Miss Hatherton!" said Lord Castletowers, hastening to the carriage-door as they drove up. "This is indeed a happy accident. You have been to the house, I suppose, to call upon my mother?"

"We have; but with no idea that we were coming to a — a fête of this kind," replied Lady Arabella, somewhat at a loss for the most appropriate word, and exchanging bows and gracious smiles with the ladies on the platform.

"Why did you not tell us about it last evening, you sly man?" asked Miss Hatherton.

"Because I then knew no more about it than yourself, fair lady," replied the Earl. "It is an improvisation."

"And what are you going to do?"

"A little of everything — rifle-shooting, leaping, running; but you shall have a programme presently; and if you will alight, I can give you seats beside my mother."

With this he gave his arm to Lady Arabella, and conducted both ladies to the place of honour.

"But where are the competitors?" said Miss Hatherton, when due greetings had been exchanged, and they had taken their seats; "and above all, where's my friend, the noble savage?"

"Trefalden? Oh, he's in our tent, out yonder. This affair was his idea entirely."

"And an admirable idea, too. But he'll beat you, you know."

"He would, if he came forward," replied the Earl; "but he declines to compete."

"Declines to compete!" echoed the heiress.

"Yes — for everything except the last race — and that we all go in for."

"I never heard of such a thing!" exclaimed Miss Hatherton, indignantly. "Why, it's as if the favourite was withdrawn at the last moment from the Derby — and I, too, who had intended to back him to any extent! I declare I was never more disappointed in my life. What's his motive?"

"He said he was out of practice," replied Castletowers, hesitatingly.

"Nonsense. That wasn't his real motive. He knew nobody else would have a chance, and he was too generous to carry off all the honours."

"Do you really think so?" said Miss Colonna, suddenly. She had listened to the conversation till now, without taking part in it.

"I do indeed. What does Lord Castletowers say?"

"I say that Miss Hatherton is right; and I *know* her to be right. Trefalden could write his name in bullets on that target, if he chose — but he won't."

Miss Hatherton turned to Miss Colonna in a glow of enthusiasm.

"That's true nobleness!" she exclaimed.

"Indeed it is," said Castletowers. "He's the finest fellow I have ever known, savage or civilised."

But Miss Colonna said nothing.

"I wish you'd bring him this way, Lord Castle-

towers," said the heiress. "I like talking to him — he amuses me immensely."

"You shall have him by-and-by," laughed the Earl; "but he is our umpire in the rifle matches, and can't be spared at present. Excuse me — another carriage full of ladies. I am master of the ceremonies."

And with this he ran off to receive the Cadogans.

And now the appointed hour being not only come, but overpast, the ladies expectant, and the audience considerable, it was decided that they should begin.

Lord Castletowers was seen to cross the ground, and enter the cricketing tent at the farther end, whence he presently emerged with his pouch belted on, and his rifle in his hand. He was followed by five others, similarly equipped; and by Saxon Trefalden, who in his quality as judge, took up a safe position to the right of the target. Miss Hatherton surveyed them through her glass as they came over the ground, and placed themselves about a dozen yards off, with their backs to the stand.

"Dear me! they are very near us," said Lady Arabella, with that sort of pretty timidity that is less charming at eight-and-forty than at eighteen. "I hope it is not dangerous."

"Don't be alarmed, my dear friend," said Miss Hatherton. "Gentlemen don't generally fire behind their own backs. So, Major Vaughan begins — and a very good shot, too — very near the centre. Who is that remarkably handsome fair man to the right?"

The question was addressed to Miss Colonna; but it received no reply. Olimpia heard the words, as she heard the report of the first rifle, without attaching any import to the sound, just as her eyes were fixed upon

the target, but saw nothing. She was absorbed in thought — very painful thought, as it would seem, by the strange hard way in which her lips were drawn together, and her fingers were mechanically twisting and tearing the programme which they held.

Miss Hatherton turned to repeat the inquiry; but, seeing the expression on Olimpia's face, remained silent. It was an expression that startled her, and puzzled her as much as it startled her. An expression such as one sees but seldom in the course of an ordinary life; neither wholly resolute, nor hopeless, nor defiant; but a blending, perhaps, of all three, with something else that might have been compunction — or despair.

Curiosity so far prevailed, that for some three or four seconds Miss Hatherton continued to stare at Olimpia instead of watching the competitors, and thus, to her infinite mortification, lost the thread of the firing. Of course, none of the ladies on the platform could help her. They saw the riflemen, and they saw the marks on the target; but not one among them had the dimmest idea of the order in which those hits had been made, or of the hands that had delivered them. The appointed number of rounds, however, having been completed, the question was set at rest by the announcement that Sir Charles Burgoyne had carried off the first prize. Sir Charles Burgoyne sauntered up accordingly to the front of the platform, and received the cup from Miss Colonna's hand with the best-bred air of indifference in the world.

"You don't share my passion for these contests, Miss Colonna," said the heiress, in the pause that ensued between the first and second match. The strange look had vanished from Olimpia's face long since; but Miss

Hatherton could not forget it — would have given something to fathom it, if possible.

"Indeed you mistake. I think them very interesting," replied Olimpia.

"But of course they cannot have so much interest for you as for me. Your sympathies are bound up in a great cause, and you must have fewer small emotions on hand."

"Perhaps," said Olimpia, with a forced smile.

"No bad news from Italy, I hope?"

"The news at present," replied Olimpia, "is neither bad nor good. It is a season of anxious suspense for all whose hearts are in the cause."

"You look anxious," said Miss Hatherton kindly, but inquisitively. "I thought just now I never saw a face look so anxious as yours. You didn't seem to remark the firing at all."

A crimson tide rushed to Olimpia's face, flooded it, and ebbed away, leaving her paler than before.

"I am quite strong enough," she replied, coldly, "to sustain such cares as fall to my lot."

The competitors for the second rifle match were now on the ground, and the conversation dropped. There were but four this time — Lord Castletowers, Sir Charles Burgoyne, Major Vaughan, and Lieutenant Torrington. Having five shots each, they fired alternately, one shot at a time, in their order as they stood — Vaughan first, Torrington second, Castletowers third, and Burgoyne fourth. It became evident, after the first two rounds, that Vaughan, although a good marksman, was inferior to both Castletowers and Burgoyne, and that Torrington was nowhere. Miss Hatherton and Miss Colonna were the only two ladies who could follow

the shots, or understand the scoring; and this they did with a degree of interest quite incomprehensible to the rest. As the end drew near, and it became evident that the victory lay between Burgoyne and the Earl, Miss Hatherton's excitement knew no bounds.

"Ten to one on Lord Castletowers," she exclaimed. "See how cool he is! See how steadily he brings up his gun — ten to one, gloves or guineas —. Will nobody take me? In the bull's-eye I vow! Beat that, Sir Charles, if you can!"

"He will *not* beat it," said Olimpia, in a low, earnest voice.

Miss Hatherton glanced at her again; but scarcely for a second. She was too deeply interested in the next shot to care much about anything else just then. But she saw Olimpia's parted lips, and the outlooking light in her eyes, and thought of both afterwards.

Up to this point, Lord Castletowers had made three bull's-eyes and two centres, scoring a total of eighteen. Sir Charles had made two bull's-eyes and two centres, scoring a total of fourteen. The next shot would be his fifth and last. If he hit the bull's-eye it would be tie between Castletowers and himself, and they would have to fire again to decide the victory; but if he scored less than four, the Earl must win.

There was a moment of intense suspense. Sir Charles brought up his gun very slowly, took aim twice before he fired, and delivered an excellent shot just *outside* the line dividing the bull's-eye from the centre. He had lost by the sixteenth of an inch.

The spectators round the ropes set up a faint respectful shout in their squire's honour; the non-competitors rushed up to the target in an excited way;

and Saxon too well pleased to care for the moment whether Burgoyne heard him or not, shook his friend by both hands, exclaiming:

"I am so glad, Castletowers — so heartily glad! I did wish you to win those pistols!"

Miss Colonna's smile was cold and indifferent enough when the Earl presented himself to receive his prize; but her hand trembled, and Miss Hatherton's sharp eyes saw it.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

How a fair Lady gave her True Knight a Guerdon.

The long jump was jumped, and the hundred yards race was run — Mr. Guy Greville winning the first by four inches, and Major Vaughan the second by four yards; and only the great race remained to be contested. In the meanwhile, half an hour was allowed for rest and refreshments. The gentlemen thronged to the platform in a mongrel costume, made up of flannel trousers, parti-coloured Jerseys, and overcoats of various descriptions; so that they looked like cricketing men below and boating men above. Servants glided solemnly about with Madeira and biscuits. The ladies congratulated the victors, and the victors congratulated each other. The spectators outside the ropes strolled about respectfully, and did a little subdued betting among themselves; and the conversation on the platform was broken up into côteries. One of these consisted of Lady Arabella Walkingshaw, Lady Castletowers, and her son.

"Vaughan ran well, didn't he?" said the Earl. "I thought at one moment that Greville would have

out-paced him; but Vaughan had better wind, and steady did it."

"You would do well, Gervase, to reserve your sporting phraseology for your male friends," said Lady Castletowers, coldly. "You forget that ladies do not appreciate its full point and vigour."

"I beg your pardon, my dear mother; but it comes so naturally when sport is the topic of conversation," replied her son. "I hope you are amused, Lady Arabella?"

"Oh yes, thank you — when you don't fire."

"There is, at all events, nothing undignified in firing," observed the Countess.

"I hope you do not think our athletic games undignified, mother?" said the Earl.

"For gentlemen, certainly. For boys, or peasants, not at all."

"But a gentleman has as many and as good muscles as a peasant. A gentleman values strength and speed as much, and sometimes more, than he values Greek and Latin; but like Greek and Latin, strength and speed must be kept up by frequent practice."

"I have no wish to argue the question," said Lady Castletowers. "It is enough that I set a higher value on skill than force, and that it gives me no gratification to see half-a-dozen gentlemen racing round a piece of sward for the entertainment of a mob of gamekeepers and ploughmen."

"Nay — for our own entertainment and yours, dearest mother," replied the young man gently. "We have never yet shut our park-gates on these good people; but their presence goes for nothing in what we do to-day."

He spoke very deferentially, but with a faint flush of annoyance on his face, and passed on to where Miss Hatherton was chatting with Saxon Trefalden.

"It will be a long time," she said, "before I can forgive you for my disappointment of this morning. You could have beaten everybody at everything, if you had pleased. It was an absurd piece of Quixotism, and I am very angry with you for it. There — don't attempt to deny it. Lord Castletowers has confessed, and it is of no use for you to plead not guilty."

"Lord Castletowers never saw me leap a foot or run a yard in his life," said Saxon emphatically. "He knows nothing of what I can or cannot do."

"I am here to answer for myself," said the Earl, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder. "And I *do* know that you can put a bullet through a shifting weathercock at five hundred yards."

"A mere trick!"

"Not so. Skill is no more to be confounded with trickery than pocket-picking with legerdemain. I am entirely of Miss Hatherton's opinion, and am certain you could have beaten us all round if you had chosen to take the trouble."

"You will find out your mistake presently, when you have all left me in the rear," said Saxon, a little impatiently; "I would recommend no one to bet upon me."

"*I* mean to bet upon you, Mr. Trefalden," said Miss Hatherton.

"Pray don't; you will be sure to lose your money."

"I don't believe it; or if I do, I shall call upon

you to pay my debts, for I shall be certain you have lagged behind on purpose."

At this moment one or two of the others came up, and the conversation turned upon the preceding contests.

"Mr. Trefalden," said Miss Colonna, "will you be kind enough to tell me how many times you have to make the circuit of the ground, in this one-mile race?"

Miss Colonna's chair stood next to Miss Hatherton's, but was placed about half-a-foot in advance, by right of her prerogative. As she turned to address him, Saxon dropped out of the heiress's côterie, and, moving round by the back of her chair, replied:

"Exactly six times, Mademoiselle."

"Will you come round to this side, Mr. Trefalden?" said Olimpia, in a low tone, "I have something to say to you."

Not without some vague sense of surprise, the young man passed on behind the second chair, and presented himself at Miss Colonna's left hand.

"You are really going to contest this one-mile race, are you not?" she asked.

"I have entered my name with the rest," replied Saxon.

"Then you mean, of course, to win if you can?"

Saxon looked embarrassed.

"I have entered my name," said he, "but I am not sure that I shall run, for all that. Somebody must act as judge; and I prefer not to race if I can help it."

"But I particularly prefer that you should race, Mr. Trefalden," said Olimpia, dropping her voice to a still lower key; "I want you to win me that purse of twenty guineas for my dear Italy."

"It will be yours, and Italy's, Mademoiselle, whoever wins it."

"I know that, Mr. Trefalden."

"Then what difference can it make whether I, or another, carry off the prize?" said Saxon, wonderingly.

"It *does* make a difference," replied Olimpia, lifting her eyes suddenly to his.

Saxon felt fluttered, without knowing why.

"What difference?" faltered he.

"Must I tell you?"

"If — if you please."

"Will you promise to win for me, if I do?"

"I don't know — I will try."

"I ask no more than that. If you really try, I am confident of victory. Well then, I want you to win because — I suppose, because I am a woman; and all women are capricious."

Saxon looked puzzled.

"I don't think you are capricious," he said.

"Do you not? Then I am afraid that is because you are a man; and all men are vain. There is a pair of maxims for you."

"Maxims for which I can discover no application," replied Saxon laughingly. "Why should I be accused of vanity because I refuse to believe that Mademoiselle Colonna is guilty of caprice?"

"I am afraid you are very dull to-day, Mr. Trefalden, — or very subtle."

"I know I am not subtle," said Saxon, "but I must be dreadfully dull."

"If your feet do not outstrip your apprehension, you will scarcely win the cup. What bell is that?"

"It's the signal for assembling," replied Saxon; "I must go now; and you have not told me after all."

"But you have promised me that you will try."

"No, no — my promise was conditional on your explanation."

"But have I not told you that women are capricious?"

"What of that?"

"We sometimes value a cowslip from one hand more than a rose from another; and — and perhaps I am so capricious as to prefer the Italian cup from yours. Hark! there is the second bell. Now, go; and bring me back the prize."

The tone in which this was said — the gesture, half persuasive, half imperious — the dazzling smile by which it was accompanied, were more than enough to turn an older head than Saxon Trefalden's. He stammered something, he scarcely knew what; and his heart leaped, he scarcely knew why.

"If you do not go at once," said Miss Colonna, "you will be too late. Shall I give you my glove for a favour. Be a true knight, and deserve it."

Breathless intoxicated, the young man pressed the glove to his lips, thrust it into his bosom, leaped down upon the course, and flew to take his place among the runners. He felt as if his feet were clad in the winged sandals of Hermes, as if his head touched the clouds, and the very air were sunshine. It was delightful, this sense of exaltation and rapture — and quite new.

Not so, however, felt Olimpia Colonna. Saxon had no sooner jumped from the platform, than the colour died out suddenly from her face, and the smile from her lips. She leaned back in her chair with a look of

intense pain and weariness, and sighed heavily. There were three persons observing her; but her thoughts were very bitter at that moment, and she was quite unconscious of their scrutiny. Those persons were Lady Castletowers; Signor Colonna, who had but just arrived, and was leaning on the back of her chair; and Miss Hatherton — and neither the look of pain nor the sigh was lost on either of the three.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Bravo, Antinous!

THE two Pulteneys stayed out, the one to act as judge, the other as time-keeper; and the time-keeper was to give the starting signal by firing a pistol.

In the meanwhile, the eight competitors were ranged side by side, close under the ladies' platform, with the sleeves of their jerseys rolled up above their elbows, the arms drawn close to their bodies, and their clenched fists pressed against their chests — all lithe and eager-looking, like a pack of greyhounds. Of these, the two tallest and fairest were Saxon Trefalden and Sir Charles Burgoyne. Sir Charles was the handsomer man; but Saxon was a shade the taller, and something more than a shade broader across the shoulders.

Well might Miss Hatherton call him the golden-haired Antinous; only that he was Antinous on a grander scale than the famous Antinous of the Capitol — Antinous with Herculean possibilities of strength and speed.

With the exception of Lord Castletowers, whose

jersey was of a creamy white, just the tint of his flannel trousers, the young men were each distinguished by the colours of their shirts. Saxon's was striped pink and white; Burgoyne's light blue and white; Vaughan's mauve and white; and so on.

All was ready. The course was clear; the spectators silent; the competitors drawn up, and waiting. Suddenly, the timekeeper threw up his hand, and fired in the air. At the same instant, as if shot from his pistol, the eight runners sprang forward, and the race began.

They had no sooner started than Saxon took the lead, running lightly and steadily, with his head well up, and his curls dancing in the sun. He was obviously putting but little labour into his running, and yet, at the first three or four bounds, he had gained a good ten feet on his companions. Next in order came Castletowers, Vaughan, and Burgoyne, almost level with each other; and close after them, Edward Brandon, whose slightness of make and length of limb enabled him to run tolerably well for a short distance; but whose want of real physique invariably knocked him up at the end of the first three hundred yards. Torrington, Greville, and Pelham Hay brought up the rear. In this order they ran the first round. At the second turn, however, just as they had neared the ladies' platform, Castletowers made a rush to the front, and passed Saxon by some three or four feet. At the same instant Vaughan and Burgoyne perceptibly increased their pace, widening the space between themselves and the four last at every stride.

And now Brandon, who had for some seconds began to show symptoms of distress, came suddenly to a stand-

still; and, being passed by those in the rear, fell, pale and panting, to the earth.

In the meanwhile, Saxon had in nowise quickened his pace, or attempted to regain his lead; but kept on at precisely the same rate throughout the whole of the second round. Just as they were beginning the third, however, and at the very point where Castletowers had made his rush, Saxon, without any apparent effort, bounded ahead, and again left his friend some three yards behind.

Torrington, Greville, and Hay now dropped out of the ranks, one by one, and gave up the contest; leaving only Saxon and Castletowers, Vaughan and Burgoyne on the ground. Presently the two latter came into collision, and went down as if they had been shot, but were on their feet again in the twinkling of an eye, and flying on as before.

At the fourth round, Castletowers brought himself up abreast with Saxon. At the fifth Burgoyne gave in, and Vaughan flagged obviously; but Castletowers again dashed forward, and again secured the lead.

A subdued murmur, that broke now and then into a cheer, ran round the course. Every eye was riveted upon the runners. Every head turned as they turned, and was outstretched to follow them. The ladies rose on the platform, and watched them through their glasses. There were only three now — a white shirt, a pink shirt, and a mauve; but white and pink divided the suffrages of the lookers-on, and nobody cared a straw for mauve.

Again the circuit was nearly completed, and they were approaching the stand. The next round would be the sixth and last. The interest of the moment

became intense. The murmur swelled again, and became a shout — hats were waved, handkerchiefs fluttered — even Lady Castletowers leaned forward with a glow of real excitement on her face.

On they came — the Earl first, in his white jersey, pale as marble, breathing in short heavy gasps, lips quivering, brows closely knitted, keeping up his lead gallantly, but keeping it by dint of sheer pluck and nervous energy. Saxon next, a little flushed, but light of foot and self-possessed as ever, as fresh apparently as when he first started, and capable of running on at the same steady rate for any number of miles that might be set before him. Vaughan last — coming up very heavily, and full twenty yards in the rear.

"Good Heavens!" cried Miss Hatherton, half beside herself with impatience, "how *can* he let Lord Castletowers keep the lead?"

"Because he cannot help it," said Olimpia, scornfully triumphant. She had forgotten that Saxon was her chosen knight, and all her sympathies were with the Earl.

"Absurd! he has but to put out a little more speed and he *must* win. The Earl is nearly — There! there! did I not tell you so? Bravo, Antinous!"

They passed the platform; and as they passed, Saxon looked up with an ardent smile, waved his hand to Olimpia, threw up his head like a young war-horse, bounded forward as if the winged sandals were really on his feet, and passed the Earl as easily as a man on horseback passes a man on foot. Till this moment the race, earnest enough for the rest, had been mere play to him. Till this moment he had not attempted to put out his speed, or show what he could do. Now he

flashed past the astonished spectators like a meteor. His feet seemed scarcely to touch the turf, his body seemed as if borne upon the air. A great roar of admiration burst from the crowd; and in the midst of the roar, before Lord Castletowers had got over a third of the distance, Saxon had made the sixth round, and passed the winning post by several feet.

"Won by a hundred and eighty yards," said Pulteney, timekeeper. "Last round thirty-one seconds and a-half. By Jove, sir, though I've seen it myself, I can scarcely believe it!"

Saxon laughed joyously.

"I could have done it almost as easily," said he, "if it had been up hill all the way."

And what did Olimpia Colonna say to her chosen knight, when he received the prize from her hands, only to lay it the next moment at her feet? Doubtless she remembered in good time that Saxon *was* her chosen knight, and forgot how disloyally her sympathies had strayed from him in the race. Doubtless her greeting had in it something poisonously sweet, subtle, intoxicating — to judge, at least, by the light in his face, as he bowed and turned away.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Elton House, Kensington.

Mr. Abel Keckwitch, with William Trefalden's private address in his pocket-book, felt much as Adrian the Fourth may have felt with haughty Barbarossa prostrate at his feet. He took it for granted that there was some dark secret at the bottom of his master's daily life. He knew quite well that a practical man like William Trefalden would never take the trouble to surround himself with mystery unless he had something to hide, and to that something Abel Keckwitch believed he now possessed the key. It never occurred to him that William Trefalden might possibly object to let such loquacious stones as copying clerks prate of his whereabouts, for other than criminal reasons. If such an idea had been suggested to him, he would have laughed it to scorn. So, to do him justice, would Mr. Kidd. Both the detective and the lawyer's clerk were too familiar with the dark side of human nature to believe for a moment that systematic mystery meant anything less than undiscovered crime.

So Abel Keckwitch took his master's address home with him, fairly written out in Mr. Nicodemus Kidd's clear business hand, and exulted therein. He was in no haste to act upon the information folded up in that little slip of paper. It was not in his nature to be in haste about anything, least of all about so sweet a dish as revenge. It must be prepared slowly, tasted a morsel at a time, and made to last as long as possible.

Above all, it must be carefully considered beforehand from every point of view, and be spoiled by no blunder at starting. So he copied the address into his commonplace book, committed it to memory, pondered over it, gloated over it, and fed his imagination on it for days before he proceeded to take any fresh steps in the matter.

"ELTON HOUSE, KENSINGTON."

Such was the address given to him by Mr. Nicodemus Kidd. "Elton House, Kensington;" not a word more — not a word less. It was an address that told nothing — suggested nothing. "Elton Villa" would have bespoken a neat, stuccoed anachronism in the Græco-Gothic style; "Elton Lodge," a prim modern residence, with gardens, gates, and a carriage-drive; "Elton Cottage," an unassuming little place, shrinking back from the high road, in a screen of lilacs and laburnums; but "Elton House" represented none of these to the mind's eye. "Elton House" might be ancient or modern, large or small, a cockney palace, or a relic of the old court days. There was nothing in its name to assist conjecture in any way. Thus again, the very suburb was perplexing. Of all districts round about London, there is none so diverse in its characteristics as Kensington — none so old in part, so new in part; so stately here, so squalid there: so of the country countrified in one direction, so of the town towny in another. Elton House might partake of any of these conditions for aught that one could gather from its name.

In short, Mr. Abel Keckwitch turned the address over in his mind much as some people turn their

letters over, stimulating their curiosity instead of gratifying it, and spelling out the motto on the seal instead of breaking it.

At length he resolved to go over to Kensington and reconnoitre the ground. Having come to this determination one Saturday afternoon (on which day, when practicable, Mr. Trefalden dismissed his clerks at five o'clock), Abel Keckwitch pushed forward with his work; closed the office precisely as St. Dunstan's clock was striking; and, instead of trudging, as usual, direct to Pentonville, turned his face westward, and hailed the first Hammersmith omnibus that came by.

It was a lovely afternoon; warm, sunny, summer-like. Mr. Trefalden's head-clerk knew that the park trees were in all the beauty of their early leafage, and that the air beyond Charing Cross would be delicious; and he was sorely tempted to take a seat on the roof. But prudence prevailed. To risk observation would be to imperil the very end for which he was working; so, with a sigh, he gave up the air and the sunshine, and took an inside place next the door.

The omnibus soon filled, and, once closely packed, rattled merrily on, till it drew up for the customary five minutes' rest at the White Horse Cellar. Then, of course, came the well-known newsvender with the evening papers; and the traditionary old lady who has always been waiting for the last three-quarters of an hour; and the conductor's vain appeal to the gallantry of gentlemen who will *not* go outside to oblige a lady — would prefer, in fact, to see a dozen ladies boiled first.

This interlude played out, the omnibus rattled on

again to the corner of Sloane Street, where several passengers alighted; and thence proceeded at a sober, leisurely rate along the Kensington-road, with the green, broad park lying all along to the right, and row after row of stately terraces to the left.

"Put me down, conductor," said Mr. Keckwitch, "at the first turning beyond Elton House."

He had weighed every word of this apparently simple sentence, and purposely waited till the omnibus was less crowded, before delivering it. He knew that the Kensington-road, taken from the point where Knightsbridge is supposed to end, up to that other point where Hammersmith is supposed to begin, covers a fair three miles of ground; and he wanted to be set down as near as possible to the spot of which he was in search. But then it was essential that he should not seem to be looking for Elton House, or going to Elton House, or inquiring about Elton House in any way; so he worded his little speech with an ingenuity that was quite masterly as far as it went.

"Elton House, sir?" said the conductor. "Don't know it. What's the name of the street?"

Mr. Keckwitch took a letter from his pocket, and affected to look for the address.

"Ah!" he replied, refolding it with a disappointed air, "that I cannot tell you. My directions only say, 'the first turning beyond Elton House.' I am a stranger to this part of London, myself."

The conductor scratched his ear, looked puzzled and applied to the driver.

"'Arry," said he. "Know Elton House?"

"Elton House?" repeated the driver. "Can't say I do."

"I think I have heard the name," observed a young man on the box.

"I'm sure I've seen it somewhere," said another on the roof.

And this was all the information to be had on the subject.

Mr. Keckwitch's ingenious artifice had failed. Elton House was evidently not to be found without enquiry — therefore inquiry must be made. It was annoying, but there was no help for it. Just as he had made up his mind to this alternative, the omnibus reached Kensington-gate and the conductor put the same question to the toll-taker that he had put to the driver.

"Davy — know Elton House?"

The toll-taker — a shaggy fellow, with a fur cap on his head and a straw in his mouth — pointed with his thumb over his shoulder, and replied,

"Somewhere down by Slade's-lane, beyond the westry."

On hearing which, Mr. Keckwitch's countenance brightened, and he requested to be set down at Slade's-lane, wherever that might be.

Slade's Lane proved to be a narrow, winding irregular by-street, leading out from the high road, and opening at the farther end upon fields and market gardens. There were houses on only one side; and on the other, high walls, with tree-tops peeping over, and here and there a side-door.

The dwellings in Slade's Lane were of different degrees of smallness; scarcely two of the same height; and all approached by little slips of front garden, more or less cultivated. There were lodgings to let, evidences of humble trades, and children playing about the gardens and door-steps of most of them. Altogether, a more unlikely spot for William Trefalden to reside in could scarcely have been selected.

Having alighted from the omnibus at the top of this street, Mr. Keckwitch, after a hurried glance to left and right, chose the wall side and walked very composedly along, taking rapid note of each door that he passed, but looking as stolid and unobservant as possible.

The side-doors were mostly painted of a dull green, with white numerals, and were evidently mere garden entrances to houses facing in an opposite direction.

All at once, just at that point where the lane made a sudden bend to the right and turned off towards the market gardens, Mr. Keckwitch found himself under the shadow of a wall considerably higher than the rest, and close against a gateway flanked by a couple of stone pillars. This gate occupied exactly the corner where the road turned, so that it blunted the angle, as it were, and commanded the lane in both directions. It was a wooden gate — old, ponderous, and studded with iron bosses, just wide enough, apparently, for a carriage to drive through, and many feet higher than it was wide. In it was a small wicket door. The stone pillars were time-stained and battered, and looked as if they might have stood there since the

days when William of Orange brought his Dutch court to Kensington. In one of them was a plain brass bell-handle. On both were painted, in faded and half illegible letters, the words, "Elton House."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Mr. Keckwitch proves himself to be a man of Original Genius.

A THRILL of virtuous satisfaction pervaded Mr. Keckwitch's respectable bosom at this discovery. He had gained the first great step, and gained it easily. The rest would be more difficult; but it was sure to follow. Besides, he was not the man to be daunted by such obstacles as were likely to present themselves in an undertaking of this kind. They were obstacles of precisely that nature which his slow, dogged, cautious temperament was best fitted to deal with; and he knew this. Perhaps, on the whole, he rather liked that there should be some difficulties in the way, that he might have the satisfaction of overcoming them. At all events, they gave an additional zest to the pursuit that he had in hand; and though his hatred needed no stimulus, Mr. Keckwitch, like most phlegmatic men, was not displeased to be stimulated.

Sufficient, however, for the day was the triumph thereof. Here was the gate of Elton House; and only to have penetrated so far into William Trefalden's mystery was an achievement of no slight importance. But the head-clerk was not contented only to see the gate. He wanted to have a glimpse of the house as well; and so walked on to the bottom of the lane, crossed

over, and returned up the other side. The lane, however, was narrow, and the walls were high; so that, take it from what point he would, the house remained invisible. He could see the tops of two or three sombre-looking trees, and a faint column of smoke melting away as it rose against the background of blue sky; but that was all, and he was none the wiser for the sight. So, knowing that he risked observation every moment that he lingered in Slade's-lane, he turned quickly back again towards the market-gardens, and passed out through a little turnstile leading to a footway shut in by thick green hedges on either side.

He could not tell in the least where this path would lead him; but, seeing a network of similar walks intersecting the enclosures in various directions, he hoped to double back, somehow or another, into the main road. In the meanwhile, he hurried on till a bend in the path carried him well out of sight of the entrance to Slade's-lane, and there paused to rest in the shade of an apple-orchard.

It was now about half-past six o'clock. The sun was still shining; the evening was still warm; the apple-blossoms filled the air with a delicious perfume. All around and before him, occupying the whole space of ground between Kensington and Brompton, lay nothing but meadows and fruit gardens, and orchards heavy with blossoms white and pink. A pleasant, peaceful scene, not without some kind of vernal beauty for appreciative eyes.

But Mr. Keckwitch's dull orbs, however feebly appreciative they might be at other times, were blind just now to every impression of beauty. Waiting there in

the shade, he wiped the perspiration from his forehead, recovered his breath as he best could, and thought only of how he might turn his journey to some farther account before going back to town. It was much to have discovered Elton House; but he had yet to learn what manner of life was led in it by William Trefalden. It would have been something only to have caught a glimpse through an open gate, to have seen whether the house were large or small, cheerful or dismal. He had expected to find it dull and dilapidated, with half the windows shuttered up, and the rest all black with the smoke of many years; and he did not feel inclined to go away in as much ignorance of these points as when he left Chancery Lane. Suddenly an idea occurred to him — a very bright, ingenious idea, which gave him so much satisfaction that he indulged in a little inaudible laugh, and started forward again quite briskly, to find his way out of this labyrinth of hedgerows and cabbage-gardens.

He had not gone many yards before he came to a cross road whence more paths branched off in every direction. Here, however, like a large blue spider in the midst of his web, stood a portly policeman, from whom Mr. Keckwitch at once learned his nearest way to Palace Gardens, and followed it. He asked for Palace Gardens this time, being anxious to emerge upon the High Street without again venturing too close to Slade's Lane in broad daylight.

Having come out at this point, Mr. Keckwitch went into the first stationer's shop that he could see, and bought a ledger. The stationer had some difficulty in supplying him, for the ledger he required was of a

somewhat unusual shape and size. "It must be oblong," he said, "plain ruled, and bound in red leather." He would not have it ruled off in columns for accounts, and the stationer had none that were not ruled in that manner. At last he found one that was quite plain — a mere oblong book of Bath-post paper bound in purple cloth, with scarlet leather back and corners; and with this, although it was not exactly what he wanted, Mr. Trefalden's headclerk was forced to content himself. He also bought a ruler, a small bottle of ink, and a couple of quill pens, saying that he would rule the book himself.

It was now striking seven by Kensington church clock; and Mr. Keckwitch, who was not used to going without his tea, inquired his way to the nearest coffee-house, which proved to be in Church-street, close by. It was a modest little place enough; but he made himself very comfortable there, establishing himself at a table at the farther end of the room, calling for lights and a substantial tea, and setting to work at once upon the ruling of his ledger. When he had done about a dozen pages, he divided each into three parts by a couple of vertical lines, and desired the waiter to bring him the London Post-office Directory. But he did not look in it for Elton House. He had searched for that some days back, and found no mention of it. He simply opened it at KENSINGTON HIGH-STREET, page four hundred and forty-nine, and proceeded patiently and methodically to copy out its contents under the several titles of Name, Address, and Occupation. By the time that he had thus filled in some four or five pages, and finished his tea, it was half-past eight o'clock, and quite dark.

"Fancy bread and biscuit baker, if you please, sir," replied Mrs. Wilson, "not confectioner."

"Thank you, ma'am. Fancy bread and biscuit baker."

And Mr. Keckwitch drew his pen through "confectioner," and substituted Mrs. Wilson's emendation with a business-like gravity that did him credit.

"I thought the Post-office Directory for this year was out already, sir," observed Mrs. Wilson, as he blotted off the entry, and closed his ledger.

"This is not the Post-office Directory, ma'am," said Mr. Keckwitch, calmly. "This is a new Directory of the Western and South-Western districts."

"Oh indeed! a sort of new Court Guide, I suppose?"

"Just so, ma'am. A sort of new Court Guide. Wish you good evenin'."

"Good evening, sir," replied Mrs. Wilson, as he again raised his finger half-way to the brim of his hat, and left the shop; he had scarcely passed the threshold, however, when he paused, and turned back.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am, for troubling you again," he said, "but perhaps you can tell me who lives at Elton House?"

"Elton House?"

"Yes; Elton House in Slade's-lane. I've been knocking and ringing there till I'm tired, and can get no one to come to the gate. Is it uninhabited?"

Mr. Keckwitch said this so naturally, and with such an air of ill-used respectablity, that detective Kidd himself would scarcely have doubted the truth of his state-

ment. As for Mrs. Wilson, she accepted every word of it in perfect good faith.

"Oh, no," she replied, "it's not uninhabited. The name is Duvernay."

"Duvernay," repeated Mr. Trefalden's head-clerk, re-opening his ledger, and dipping his pen in Mrs. Wilson's ink. "With your leave, ma'am. A foreign family, I suppose?"

"I think she is French."

"And Mr. Duvernay — can you tell me what profession to enter?"

"There is no Mr. Duvernay," said Mrs. Wilson, with an odd little cough, and a slight elevation of the eyebrows. "At least, not that I am aware of."

Mr. Keckwitch looked up with that dull light in his eyes that only came to them under circumstances of strong excitement. Mrs. Wilson looked down, and coughed again.

"Is the lady a widow?" he asked, huskily.

"I believe she calls herself a widow," replied Mrs. Wilson; "but indeed, sir, I can't say what she is."

"And there's no gentleman?"

"I didn't say that, sir."

"I beg your pardon, I thought I understood so."

"I said there was no Mr. Duvernay; and no more there is. But I don't desire to speak ill of my neighbours, and Madam's a customer."

Mr. Keckwitch shook his head solemnly.

"Dear! dear!" said he. "Very sad, very sad, indeed. A wicked world, ma'am. So little real respectability in it."

"Very true, sir."

"Then I suppose I must simply put down *Madame Duvernay*, there being no master to the house."

"I suppose so, sir. There is no master that I know of; at least, no acknowledged master."

"Still, if there is a gentleman, and he lives in the house, as I think you implied just now —"

"Oh, sir, I imply nothing," said the mistress of the shop, somewhat impatiently, as if she had had enough of the subject. "Madame Duvernay's doings are nothing to me; and the gentleman may be her husband for aught I know to the contrary."

"You cannot give me his name, ma'am?"

"No, sir."

"I am sorry for that. I ought to have his name if he really lives in the house."

"I cannot give it to you, because I don't know it," said Mrs. Wilson, rather more graciously. "I cannot even take it upon myself to say that he lives at Elton House. There is a gentleman there, I believe, very constantly; but he may be a visitor. I really can't tell; and it's no business of mine."

"Nor of mine, if he is only a visitor," replied Mr. Keckwitch, again closing his ledger, and preparing to be gone. "We take no note of visitors, but we're bound to take note of regular inhabitants. I'm very much obliged to you ma'am — very much indeed."

"I'm sure, sir, you're very welcome."

"Thank you. A little help often goes a long way in matters of this kind; and it isn't pleasant to stand at a gate knocking and ringing for half-an-hour together."

"No, indeed; far from it, sir. I can't think what all the servants were about, to let you do so."

"Good evenin' once more, ma'am."

"Good evening, sir."

And Mr. Keckwitch walked out of the shop, this time without turning back again.

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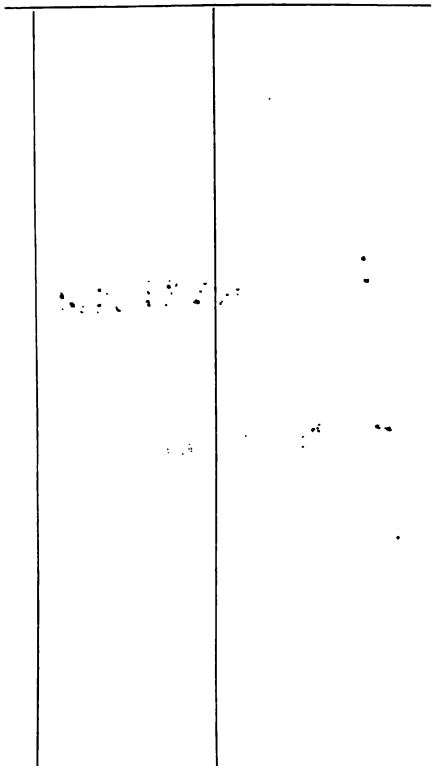

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